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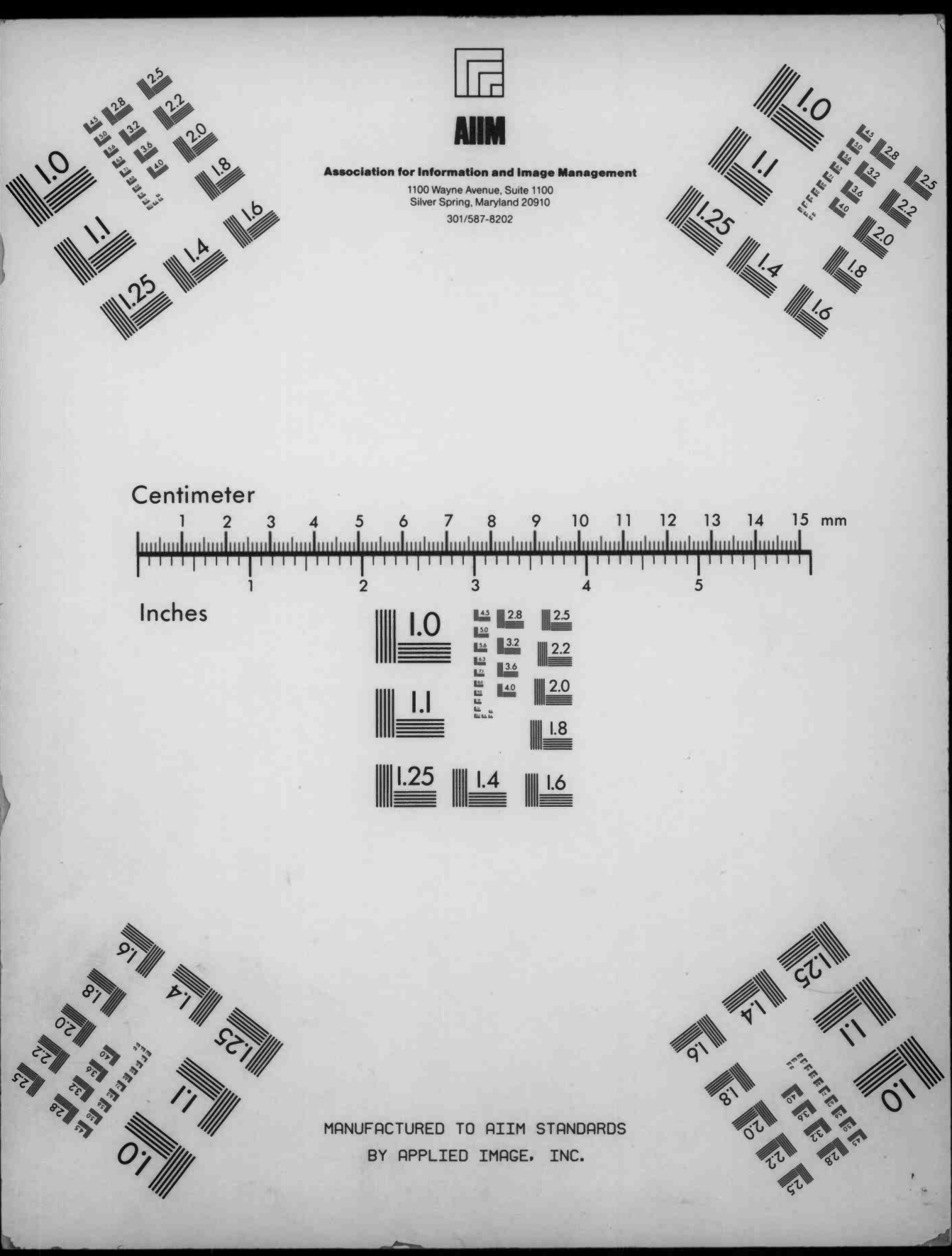
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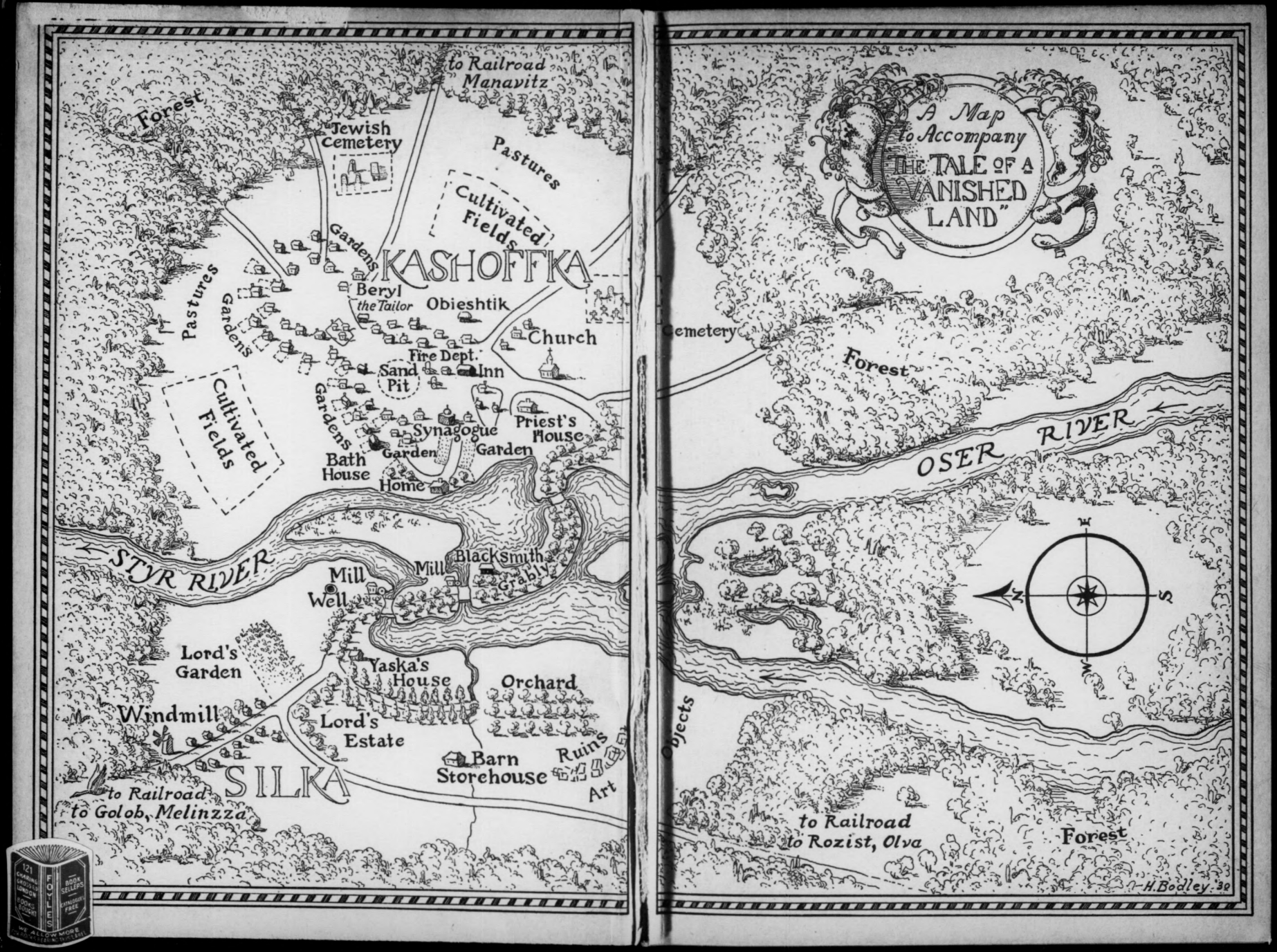
A Map to Accompany "THE TALE OF A VANISHED LAND"
to Railroad Manavitz
Forest
Jewish cemetery
Pastures
Cultivated Fields
Gardens
KASHOFFKA
Beryl the Tailor
Obieshtik
Church
Fire Dept.
Sand Pit
Inn
Priest's House
Synagogue
Garden
Garden
Bath House
Home
Cultivated Fields
Pastures
Gardens
STYR RIVER
Mill
Well
Mill
Blacksmith
Grably
Lord's Garden
Yaska's House
Orchard
Windmill
Lord's Estate
Barn
Storehouse
Ruins
Art Objects
SILKA
to Railroad to Golob, Melinzza
Cemetery
Forest
OSER RIVER
W
N
S
to Railroad to Rozist, Olva
Forest
H. Bodley '30

TALE OF A VANISHED LAND

A VANISHED LAND

TALE OF A VANISHED LAND

Memories of a Childhood in Old Russia

BY

HARRY E. BURROUGHS

Illustrated with Woodcuts by

HOWARD SIMON

LONDON

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY
OF
MY MOTHER

NOTE

I WISH to acknowledge the aid and inspiration received from my wife and friends who encouraged me to set down these memories of a life that is no more.

H. E. B.

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TALE OF A VANISHED LAND

I

In writing of the village where my early years were spent, of the life from which I derived my first impressions, of the people I knew in my childhood, I have perhaps more than the usual incentive. For neither the community nor the life exists to-day except as their survivors remember it, and these survivors are scattered in no ordinary way, not only geographically but through the most widely divergent fields of activity. They meet by chance, sometimes, one or two of them, and discuss old times with a mingling of relief, regret, or bewilderment, and then they part again and different things go on around them all. I am always glad when I encounter them, glad to see how much they have acquired or how little they have changed, eager to enhance my own memories with fragments of theirs.

Kashoffka, which at the time of my birth was a Russian village, and now, for the second time at least, the ground on which it stood is part of Poland, came into general notice only in the act of its passing away, and was soon forgotten again, like some obscure person whose name is flashed from one strange city to another in the newspapers because he has fallen from a celebrated tower or has been crushed by the wheels of a prominent man's automobile. I was astonished, in consulting a recent map to aid me in preparing these memoirs, to find there the name of the town which, in the days when it contained fifty Jewish families and two or three hundred Russian peasants on

outlying farms, had scarcely been heard of farther than a horse could travel in two days.

And the ignorance of the outside world concerning Kashoffka was more than equaled by that of its inhabitants concerning the rest of the globe. Located near the junction of two rivers, the Styr and the Oser, and surrounded by sandy and swampy areas bordered with rich and fertile higher ground, Kashoffka's horizon was marked by the dark, jagged lines of thick pine forests which enclosed it so effectively that the landscape's influence must have crept steadily into the hearts of the people who had always lived there. What they could see formed their universe. Their habits came to them from preceding generations and were handed on with little change. Travelers passed through infrequently, driving herds of cattle, fleeing from justice or injustice, plying itinerant trades or merely tramping the earth. Now and then an official, dressed in the most imposing uniform he could contrive, made the villagers uneasy by his presence. But for the most part they saw their neighbors only and talked about their own affairs or God's or the Devil's.

I can remember going to a neighbor's house, when I was less than six years old, to hear a stranger, standing upon a crude wooden table, describe and imitate the noises made by a train. My father and mother and nearly all the people we knew had crowded into the little shack, paying two kopeks apiece, to witness this demonstration of what took place beyond that rim of treetops. Of all the men and women gathered there, my father was the only one who had come to judge rather than enjoy the performance, since he had already been to America at that time and had traveled not only on steam trains but on boats as well. It was a dark afternoon in the late fall or

early winter, before the first snow, and the rough-hewn timbers of the crowded house reflected the dancing flames of the pine knots which, from the shelf of the huge brick stove, furnished the only light. The stranger, excited by the strained attention of his audience, crouched, whistled, hissed, and screamed, weirdly conveying the idea of prodigious speed and fiendish noise. My father, enjoying almost an equal attention, smiled inscrutably as frightened peasants looked to him for confirmation or contradiction of what was being shown.

'You cannot convince me,' said a strong, serene-faced peasant at the end, 'that wagons fly from place to place without horses. The Devil is at the bottom of it all.'

And he spat three times over his left shoulder and crossed himself, his gestures repeated by those around him.

In so far as Kashoffka is concerned, this sturdy man with clear blue eyes and a high forehead was wiser than he knew, for the railroad which at that time passed through the distant city of Golob was one of the principal causes of Kashoffka's downfall.

When I speak of Kashoffka having ceased to exist, I do not mean in the usual way, by having changed its aspect in conformity to what is known as progress until it has become unrecognizable. That could be said of the birthplace of nearly any one who has reached the age of forty. Just the other day I read that an aviator, flying over what were thought to be jungle wastes of South America, had seen from above the hidden shapes which proved to be the ruins of an ancient city. Doubtless archæologists will rummage there and find old battlements and tombs and records and that forgotten civilization will be brought to light again. In a thousand years I do not know what sort

of equipage will soar above Kashoffka, but its pilot will see nothing there to reveal its story. The houses and barns have been burned and razed to the ground, traces of the graves of its inhabitants have been obscured by rows and rows of the graves of strangers. Some of its people died violently, others slowly from want and starvation. And if any one knows why, it is not one who lived there in picturesque isolation, oblivious to the forces which were converging to complete its destiny. If I long to rescue it from utter oblivion, may I be pardoned, since it is such a vital part of me.

Do not turn away, you who are weary of the tales of suffering and of sorrow. It is the life and not the death of which I wish to write. I was far away, and in the uniform of the United States, when the *débâcle* occurred, and the news of it has come to me haphazardly from other sources. I have even spared myself the sight of its lack of remains, in order not to dim my childhood recollections.

To me it is still alive and gay. I should like to evoke the fragrance of its pines, the measured tread of peasants tramping forth to work at dawn, the chorus of the songs they used to sing, the flash of brightly colored garments as the young women slapped them on the flat stones by the riverside, the muddy roads arched over with venerable trees. I should like to project upon a screen those crafty or credulous faces brought into high relief by the flames, the gardens vibrant with summer sunshine, the vast expanses of snow and ice over which the oxen dragged rude wagons or the horses pulled the sleighs. We are taught that sounds go on in endless circles, widening constantly into space, and if that is so perhaps the din of the Krechma or village tavern still makes drunken echoes between the stars or the chants

from the synagogue beat eloquently elsewhere as they do in my own brain when my thoughts take me back to them.

However that may be, our human destinies proceed less logically than those laid out for sound waves, for I, who in Kashoffka days was meant to be a rabbi, have turned out thus far to be a lawyer and a business man, and instead of spending my life in the dim walls of a synagogue or study, poring over the Talmud and trying to bring to bear old truths upon the problems of my fellows, I find myself in the flurry of American life to-day, and this moment writing, not in Hebrew, as would have been the case had my mother's dreams and hopes come true to the letter, but in English, which I began to acquire at the age of thirteen. Such schooling as I have had I have been obliged to pick up at odd moments before or after working hours and on Sundays and holidays, yet I have never lost the feeling that I should have enjoyed a life of study and meditation, as far removed from material worries as it is possible to be. I do not say this in a spirit of frustration or disappointment, but merely to indicate that I believe quite another sort of person could have resulted from the materials contained in me. Many people, of course, feel a continuous conflict within themselves of opposed and contrasting personalities they have inherited directly, but with me this duplicate set of impulses applies to even the most trivial acts. My mother was so keenly sensitive to the wishes or sufferings of others that her whole life was spent in kind and charitable endeavor. Her health was frail and her spirit intense and calm. My father was hearty and robust, afraid of no one, adventurous, shrewd, selfish and impulsively generous at the same time, and had all the instincts of a lawyer and a show man. He was

the first man to leave Kashoffka for America and reached Boston shortly after I was born, as I learned first from the lullabies mother used to improvise as she sang to me.

One of the first beliefs I assimilated was that I had brought my parents luck. Before I was five years old the peasants spoke of me as being lucky, principally, I think, because of my red hair. At any rate, I developed steadily the idea that I could trust chance to favor me, in an emergency, and that feeling is one of the strongest components of my character and has influenced more of my decisions than I am myself aware of.

It seems to be the general impression in the United States that all immigrants from Russia began their lives in squalor and oppression. Such is not the case with me. My family was the wealthiest in Kashoffka, and whatever comforts were known in that locality and epoch we enjoyed. My mother's solicitude for her less fortunate neighbors won us the deepest sort of respect from Jews and Russians alike, and my father's enterprise, while it stirred some rivalry and opposition, added another kind of prestige which tended in the beginning to make me feel both fortunate and important. I was mother's favorite child and was chosen for the most dignified and honorable career our community offered, that of a rabbi.

Of course, judged by the standards of to-day or of larger and more thriving places then, Kashoffka's best was by no means luxurious, and the family had seen desperately hard times in cases of plague and conflagration. The fire which wiped out the entire Jewish section of the village occurred long before I was born, but I heard the story of it again and again. It indicates to what extent the pious observances of Mosaic law were carried.

Next door to the house of the rabbi of the orthodox

THE HOLIDAY FIRE

synagogue lived a man named Pinchras whose function it was to kill the cattle for food, according to the religious practices. He was extremely pious and had more learning than the others. One Easter holiday he climbed the ladder to the loft of his house to get some matzos, or unleavened bread, holding a candle in his hand. The loft was nearly filled with hay and the flame of Pinchras's candle set fire to it. Now the laws of Moses forbid the act of extinguishing a fire on Saturday or holidays. Dismayed, Pinchras watched the flames grow higher, until the heat drove him from the ladder. Timbers began to crackle, a high wind came up and whirled burning brands from one thatched roof to another, and before evening the center of Kashoffka was in smoking ruins.

Between the time of the fire and the year of my birth the village suffered from an epidemic of typhus, which resulted in the death of five children in our family, leaving only my sister Bessie and my brother Samuel. This plague left the whole neighborhood in desolation and impoverished my father, who had been engaged in various kinds of business. Father was forced to go into a distant forest to work, and made a living by stripping and selling bark, coming home only for the Sabbath and the holidays. This was not at all what he wanted to do, and he thought of nothing day or night except means to get out of his difficulties. On the day I was born, father, not knowing I had arrived in the world, found one hundred roubles in a hollow stump in the woods, dropped his axe, and came striding home with his head full of plans to go to America and make a fortune. That was the origin of the idea that I was an omen of good luck and the story spread through the village and persisted.

Fabulous notions of America, including tales that the

streets were paved with gold, and other conceptions derived unconsciously no doubt from Old Testament descriptions of Paradise, were current in Kashoffka and the surrounding towns, but among the most religious Jews there was also a grave dread and suspicion of the place. It was believed that the Jewish laws could not be observed there strictly and that money earned in America was gained at the expense of spiritual welfare. The hundred roubles was barely enough to get father to America. Mother stayed in Kashoffka. The first thing I remember is seeing my hand black with ink and wondering about it. Father, wishing to have some direct souvenir of me, had asked mother to stamp the print of my hand on a page of the letter she was writing. I must have been less than two years old, but from that time on my memory of events which took place around me is strikingly clear. How often I have astonished my brother and sister or former neighbors nearly twice my age by recalling to them an occurrence they had all but forgotten and had had no idea I knew about!

Before I could walk, my mother would hold me for hours where I could see the broad river and watch the lazy revolutions of the water wheels, dripping in the sun, and follow with my eyes the wagons of the various peasants as they crossed the old earthen dam, or Grabley, and drove into town. Most of the wagons were drawn by oxen, heads bowed solemnly beneath the heavy yoke, but one of the peasants named Parchvertsi owned horses, and was so proud of them that the moment they stepped off the Grabley and turned toward home, he would stand erect, feet wide apart and whip cracking, and would drive through the village at breakneck speed, laughing and shouting as women screamed and rushed to get their

children out of harm's way. Another favorite with the children was old Abish, the father of Beryl the shoemaker, who was a regular buffoon. In spite of his eighty years, Abish would stalk all around town on the happy holidays, perched on stilts so high that he was able to sit upon the roofs of the houses when he took a notion to rest. Always he carried on his back and slung over his shoulder special sacks of pears or apples, and when the children had gathered together at his heels and followed him through the streets, he would sit down upon the roof of the tavern or one of the Chassidim synagogues and toss down the fruit and chuckle as the children scrambled madly for it. It was said that Abish had never done a day's work in his life. He had been left an orphan and was brought up by the great-grandfather of a man who made the journey to America with me and who is now a dry-goods merchant in a city not far from Boston. Abish had had a good voice, as a boy, and had become a traveling cantor, going from town to town for many years. In Kashoffka he was a deacon, and often in the synagogue he would jump to his feet to prompt whoever was conducting the services. He was a short, gnomish man, with large hands and feet, and on his stilts looked for all the world like a mischievous crane. I remember him with gratitude to this day, for he was one of the vanishing race of wanderers and holiday-makers which used to brighten solitary lives.

At the time I was born, our family was living in the house of Schloime Gimbel, who is now in Framingham, Massachusetts, where he carries on a junk and rag business. This trade, by the way, is a very popular one with pious Jews, not because it is easy or particularly remunerative, but on account of the fact that rag and junk men are not obliged to work on Saturdays. Consequently,

some very good Talmudists and well-educated men are to be found in the ranks of the rag peddlers. Schloime was no scholar, however, but he was tall and quite good-looking in his early thirties, and I remember one day, when I was very small and Schloime was still in Kashoffka, that he offered to drive my sister to another village and that I was sent along as a sort of chaperon. Bessie was then sixteen or seventeen and a very pretty girl, and I was somewhat bewildered because Schloime would stop, occasionally, in the thick woods and suggest that I go looking for this or that while Bessie nudged me in a fashion which I understood to mean that I must on no account go away.

Schloime Gimbel is one of those whose personality has remained the same after more than thirty years in America. He goes about his business of life at the same leisurely gait and shrugs his shoulders non-concernedly at each evidence of modern improvement which affects his calling. Not long ago I called on him at his house and his place of business, and, as I approached, Schloime's grandson, a model of up-to-date American youth, was trying to light his grandfather's cigarette with a patent lighter. The little silver contraption failed to work, and the languid amusement and triumph with which Schloime struck a match upon his dusty trousers was truly eloquent. Not a word was said. Schloime still thinks running water is unnecessary in a house.

In the center of Kashoffka was an almost circular area of sand around which stood the houses of the Jewish families, among them Schloime's which we occupied. My father being absent, his place as head of the family was taken by Feivish, my mother's stepbrother, whose influence upon my earliest thoughts was gentle and inspiring. Feivish had no opportunities to attend school, but was a natural scholar and no amount of hard work or privation could dampen his desire for learning. He had taught himself Hebrew and Russian, had gleaned a fair knowledge of German and French from old textbooks which he traveled miles to obtain, could play on a home-made fiddle, and, with colors he extracted from the clay and the bark of trees, had decorated the front of our oven. In the evenings he would play the melancholy Russian songs or the rollicking dances of the Chassidim, while mother, holding me by the window, would join in the song or listen silently. On Sundays we could hear the anthems from the Russian church not far away, washerwomen sang all day by the river, and at sunset, after the sheep being driven homeward made the fields appear to creep, barefooted men and women, with wooden rakes and spades over their shoulders, would harmonize the choruses while one of their number would improvise a verse about the gray ox or the rain that might come tomorrow. Their clothes were dyed and embroidered with vivid colors, brighter than the woods and the fields, and as the sun cooled the mood of their music would veer quickly to sadness and their voices blend with the somber shades of the night which quickly followed.

Feivish's best friend, Gershon, whose parents had been engaged in the liquor trade before the government monopoly on vodka went into effect, and for a short time afterward, was studious and full of intellectual curiosity, and he and Feivish studied together and spent their spare time discussing history, philosophy, astronomy, and almost anything which seemed to their neighbors to have no immediate bearing upon the necessaries of life. It must be borne in mind, however, that from the earliest

days of the settlement of Poland by the Jews, secular learning was looked upon with deep suspicion by the pious, and this feeling was fostered and encouraged by the orthodox rabbis. A learned Jew, from the most orthodox point of view, need know nothing of history, philosophy, languages, mathematics, or the culture of the Gentiles. His mental equipment was the Torah, or books of law; his language was Hebrew. The German Jews, under Friedländer, were the first to break through this barrier, and in Lithuania and Poland for centuries, the word 'German' was synonymous with heresy and dangerous ventures into harmful intellectual fields. The German Jews learned the German language, and urged other Jews to adopt the language of the land in which they lived in order that they might make themselves understood and liked. They wore German clothes, often cut their beards and earlocks, and in general assumed the appearance of a 'Goy' or Gentile. In the Volhynia district, where Kashoffka was situated, as in old Poland generally, the sect known as Chassidim was prominent, and while the Chassids were gentle and picturesque, believing that one's duty to God consisted in kindness and in showing a merry face, they were somewhat contemptuous of learning for reasons different from the Orthodox. To a Chassid, learning was not essential. For advice and counsel they consulted their tzaddiks, or holy men, and left to others the task of 'breaking their heads' over books. So Feivish and Gershon, representing the intellectual element of the Jewish population, were somewhat under suspicion by the very pious in Kashoffka and were freely ridiculed by the happy-go-lucky Chassidim. Nevertheless they were loved and respected at the same time by nearly everybody. The townspeople would often

ask them questions in cases where their superior intelligence could be of service or to address their letters to America. When visitors arrived, Gershon and Feivish would ask them eagerly about the latest news from Warsaw or Lemberg and, if they were especially lucky, might get a copy of a Russian newspaper, five or six weeks old, which they would read aloud and interpret to the entire village.

The fates of these two men were quite different, but each one had an element of the tragic, for Feivish was destined to spend a large part of his life in America, to whose ways, marvelous as they are in some respects, he will always remain a stranger. Gershon, on the other hand, left alone by his friend's excursion to the new land, weighed down by the pressure of distrust and ridicule all around him, lost his mind and died of misunderstanding and loneliness. Peace be with his soul! For a while, after Feivish had left, he tried to continue his studies. His father, secretly proud of a son who could read so much print and talk with any men who arrived in the village, had a sort of shed built on to his house in order that Gershon might indulge his love of privacy and reflection. But without his friend to help him withstand the hostility and contempt of his neighbors, Gershon found it hard to go on. He stopped reading, after a time, and endless questions chased one another in futile circles around his mind. Why would not men learn and listen? Why must brains be deadened with outmoded quibbling and ancient laws? His parents grieved as he failed in health. The superstitious ones nodded their heads. The Devil was taking his due. I wonder how many graves there are in Poland, Russia, and Lithuania whose headstones might bear an epitaph similar to that of Gershon. In Kashoffka, as

elsewhere, to be in advance of one's time meant suffering and often death.

When I speak of mother's holding me by the window, I touch upon one of the principal advantages the rich had over the poor in Kashoffka, for in many of the peasant homes there were no windows at all. The Jewish houses were just slightly more pretentious. Some of them had a comfortable loft and a tight roof of straw, and were equipped with rough wooden furniture. Across the river from the center of the town, besides the two water mills which I watched constantly, I could see the vast orchard which bordered upon the estate of the only nobleman who lived within our horizon. Formerly it had belonged to a Polish lord and at that time was occupied by a Russian named Osdooski. At the corner of the orchard was Yaska's house, Yaska being the peasant who took care of the place and who had several most beautiful daughters, one of whom worked for us. She was so beautiful, however, that none of the men were able to work while she was in sight and it was necessary to find isolated tasks for her continually, which made it hard to find my brother Sam from time to time. The sight of the fruit trees and shrubs, blooming so profusely in rows which undulated with the rise and fall of the ground, intrigued me long before I was able to go far. My first ambition was to roam in that orchard. There were gardens with exotic flowers and strange birds which built their nests in the hollows. A part of the estate had been used as a park and, while this had been allowed to fall almost to ruins, it was beautiful in a wilder way than it must have been when it was better cared for. Fragments of statues were scattered among the bushes and overgrown pathways, and on my first visit there I was fascinated by those stone

and marble faces and figures. I picked up a piece of the image of a Christian saint and brought it back with me. Before I reached home, one of our pious neighbors saw what I was carrying and let out a shriek, telling me to throw it away, that it would bring a curse on the whole village. Quite innocently I stirred up a tremendous excitement.

In order to reach the orchard, we took the road leading eastward from the center, past the synagogue and the Russian church, the residence of the priest and his assistant, called the dyak, to the Grabley by means of which we crossed the river. The Grabley must have been built many decades before, for the trees which had been planted there to anchor it against the floods were enormous and tall, entwining their branches over the roadway. This primitive dike had been built by dumping stones, logs, and dirt into the river and driving piles into the mud on either edge. There were three bridges beneath which the water escaped downstream and the roadway was so uneven and muddy that oxen often floundered to their bellies in the mud. The Grabley crossed the river just east of town and followed the opposite bank as far as Yaska's house, where the road headed southwesterly toward the distant city of Roshist, which was famous all over Volhynia for its mud.

Except during the extreme low water, in August and September, it was necessary to cross the Grabley in order to get in or out of town, and this picturesque old dike played an important part in all of Kashoffka's activities.

In the morning stillness, just after the first inhabitants were stirring, and the shadows of the great trees were long upon the river, the shepherds who had collected the cattle and sheep from the various barns and houses

would drive the beasts across the Grabley toward the pasture. After the sheep waddled the geese, which were kept in line by means of long rods. Last of all, the peasants, men and women, young and old, set off to work with wooden rakes and spades on their shoulders, the women often carrying babies in cribs on their backs. Singing and tramping along to the rhythm of the herds which preceded them, they made their way to the fields still damp with dew. Here and there in the still waters, a fish would jump and disappear. Birds flew back and forth over the cattle, often lighting upon the back of a cow or a sheep and bursting into song. The swallows dipped in and out of stable doorways, first high in the air, then skimming the ground. The strange procession would begin just before daylight and the last stragglers would be seen as the sun rose above the surface of the river and touched with light the branches of all the trees.

In the evening, the process was reversed. As the light grew dim, the herds of cattle would appear upon the road across the river stirring up huge clouds of dust. The wide horizon seemed to sink slowly into slumber, as if a circle of giants had become drowsy in watching the scene. As the cows and pigs were sorted out, and the sheep stood with their staring faces, bleating constantly, the shepherds would crack their long whips. Across the Grabley would come the geese, quacking and making little sallies toward the water. Then, as the sun was low, the peasants returned, their faces burning and their hair filled with dust, but still singing. Darkness would deepen as the evening meal progressed, and the moon would bathe the scene in its mysterious light. Another day for the peasants, the fields, and the animals — measured and determined by the sun, the giver of life.

If there was to be a wedding, the guests could be seen approaching on the far side of the river and were greeted on the Grabley and escorted to their destinations by those who were to entertain them. Should a strange wagon or a wanderer on foot be seen at a distance, all eyes were on the Grabley and all tongues were whispering until the newcomer was identified. If the Rotnik, or district police official, was spied, his bright red blouse and golden epaulettes flashing in the sun, every one would begin to tremble and to pray. Usually, though, the Rotnik sent a messenger in advance, in order to give the people time to be properly terrified, and in that case special prayers would be chanted in the synagogue and in the Russian church that nothing irregular might happen during the Rotnik's stay. Work was stopped and everybody stayed at home until the Rotnik departed again, in order that the chances of offending him might be minimized.

At the age of three, I was sent to the Cheder, or Hebrew school, in charge of an old teacher named Sender, and there I learned the alphabet and the elements of reading and ciphering. At once I was singled out as a boy with 'an open head' — that is, one who learned easily — and this praise, together with the deference with which my mother was treated by every one we met along the way to school, added to my feeling of importance. Mother impressed me always not to be arrogant or unkind, but she let me know very early in life that she expected great things of me, and because I succeeded so well in school, surpassing easily many of the boys more than twice my age, I grew up with the conviction that I was destined for a high career. Do not close the book, my friend, for before many years I was made to feel as small as formerly I had felt important, but I do not remember ever having

been a child in my thoughts, and as soon as I could walk I preferred the company of older people to that of boys of my own age. My rapid progress at school, and the fact that I learned simple arithmetic so readily that I was called upon to figure weights and amounts for my elders who could only count upon their fingers, fed my notion of superiority and maturity, so I felt very pleased and very wise when the honest, good-natured peasants would wag their heads and say I was a smart boy. To tell the truth, I realized dimly even then that the compliments I received were in a way a tribute to my mother.

The influence of my mother and of Feivish filled the first four years of my life. Throughout the village mother was called Hannah the Saint, and my affection for her was so strong that I would do anything rather than make her feel badly. It was no secret that I was her favorite child. A bond existed between us which set us apart from the rest of the family. She was reluctant to let me out of her sight, and all the time I was with her she was doing something to make me comfortable or teaching me to be kind to others. Her solicitude extended to every corner of Kashoffka. No shanty was too squalid for her to enter, no drunkard too depraved or dirty to receive her attention. She had no fear of disease or of violence, and considered that the most unfortunate and stupid were especially designated by God for the favored to care for.

One afternoon I heard a terrible wailing and sobbing outside our door. Mother and I were alone in the house and she at once opened the door to see what was the matter. In came David the Meshuganer (the Crazy) as far as his tremendous girth would permit, and mother was obliged to tug with all her might to get him through the doorway. Undoubtedly I had seen him many times

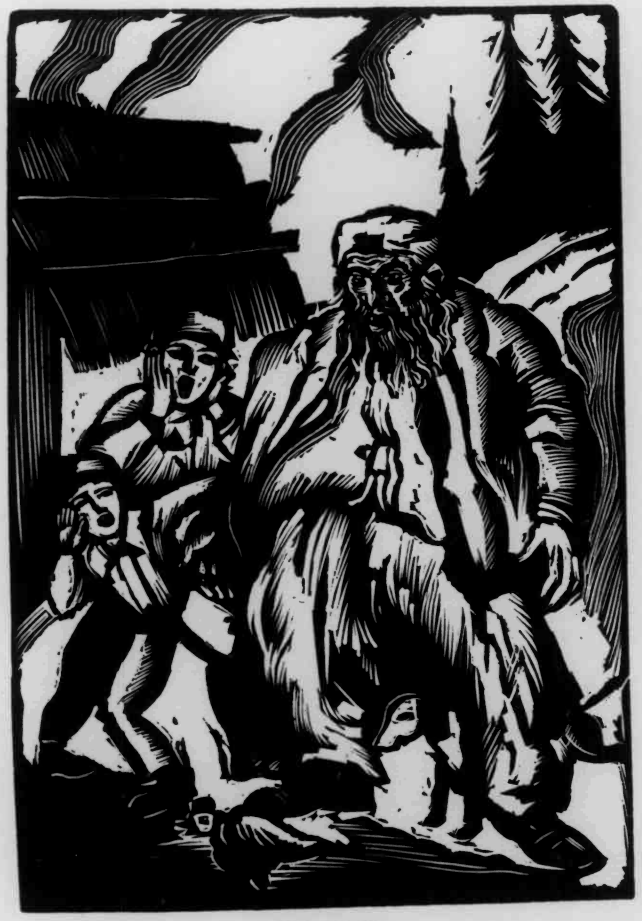
before, but this is my first conscious recollection of him. He was lamenting, tearing his hair and beating his breast, his face such a picture of grief as only a Jewish face can present. Years later I learned his story.

When he was a young man, David had fallen desperately in love with a girl from Chlevan, who had returned his affection, contrary to her parents' wishes and the customs by which marriages were arranged. David was poor and his people of the humblest class, but the girl's parents, afraid that her health would be affected if they refused outright, let David believe he was to have the girl and secretly arranged another suitable marriage into which they forced her, giving her no chance to let David know what was happening. The girl's name was Malke, which means Queen.

When he heard the news, David fell flat on his face and remained lying in the mud for hours. He neglected his work, skulking about the synagogue and talking to himself, and gradually he lost hold on his mind. Because of his name and that of the girl he had lost, he began to imagine that he was King David. The imaginations of the Jewish people in remote villages are invariably colored by Old Testament stories. David's idea of a great king included great corpulence, and because he himself was slight in stature, he begged all the old clothes he could secure and put on one garment over another until he was as broad as he was tall. As his beard grew and his girth increased, he lost at times his troubled air and became beneficent. Every girl he saw was to be his queen, for King David must have many wives. As he became completely under the spell of his illusion, he grew more gentle and never was known to do any one the slightest harm. Mothers with too many children on their hands and lots

of work to do induced David to run errands for them and to take care of the little ones, so that he always had a flock of children at his heels, the boys to be his soldiers and the girls his wives. Children in Kashoffka were often promised in marriage at the age of eight or nine and frequently married at the age of eleven, and whenever an engagement was announced, with the customary festivities, David would be thrown into paroxysms of grief if the girl had previously been promised to him as a reward for carrying innumerable pails of water or sand. This was usually the case. One of the most conspicuous cases of this kind was when the father-in-law of the man I have mentioned as having crossed the ocean with me was building a house. David worked for weeks, lugging timbers, mixing plaster, and toiling from morning until night, as Jacob had labored for Laban's daughter, on the strength of a promise that Zlatka should be one of his wives; and when she married, he wept until slowly the incident passed from his clouded mind and another of his neighbors had work to be done and a daughter with which to lure him.

He was happiest when he believed he was winning a girl or after somebody had given him another article of clothing. He was afraid to take off his clothes, for fear they would be stolen, and so he smelled like a whole flock of billy-goats. Mother never teased him, and so he came to her for comfort when he was most unhappy. She urged him to wash and brush his clothes and once in a great while succeeded in getting him to do so. Because of mother's attitude I was inclined to defend David when children threw stones at him or pulled at his rags, and in that way got into some of my first fights, of which mother naturally did not approve, however good the cause. On the oc-



KING DAVID

casion I first mentioned, mother gave him a cake to eat, and as he gobbled it, tears running down his cheeks and leaving streaks of dirt, he forgot his troubles and left the house smiling, she pushing him from behind to get him through the door again. Tormented spirit! Like old Abish, who sought refuge in buffoonery from a restless and too active mind, you found solace in the company of children from the injustices and frustrations of the world of adults! I do not know what became of you or what strangers made sport of you in the days that were to come! You were a fool and you thought you were king, and there have been many others of the same mind who have done more harm!

That period of my life beginning when I started to notice what was going on and ending with father's return from America, after which I was absorbed in a bustle of activity, was surely the most tranquil of my life. In my third year, I remembered the great white winter of the year before as the snow began to fall; the peasants took to their houses and slept for days on end and I was taken to school. There was no need for clocks in Kashoffka for the bells of the Russian church echoed through the valley each morning and evening and on Friday the tall white-haired giant who tended the public bath would go shouting through the center and the village streets for the men to take their weekly bath. On Saturday there were services in the synagogue and on Sunday the peasants went to church and stayed away from the fields. Floods came in spring, the bees and other insects and the flowers announced the return of summer, and in the autumn the moon grew huge and hung so low above the harvest fields that the nights were brighter than days, sometimes.

Before I had strayed farther than the sanded area between the Jewish houses, I saw the hens hopping in and out of doorways, searching in the earth for worms, and sheltering their chickens. The pigs belonging to the peasants rooted all over our section of the town, acting as scavengers in the ill-smelling area behind the houses. They seemed to be there in all kinds of weather, except when the snow covered everything as high as the windows.

But the sign of the opening season, most eagerly watched for by children and adults as well, was the coming of the storks. The houses which the storks selected for a nesting-place were assured of good luck and the old storks came back to the same place year after year. They were known to the villagers by slight differences in their habits. One preferred snakes and would be seen winging slowly through the air with its prey wriggling in its beak; another fished for frogs by the river near the place where the washerwomen worked, standing in the mud on his long legs and cocking his head wisely at the water below, from which he would pull up the unlucky frogs with a quick snap of his beak and fly back to his nest to feed the young birds or the mother who was hatching the eggs. The nests were built of sticks, carefully laid together like crude basket work. Some of the storks were great thieves and would stalk about the sanded circle watching for the moment to snatch a cap or a glove and fly off with it.

The thing about the storks which impressed me most was the military way in which they assembled to make their departure together in the autumn. This seemed most mysterious to me as a child and it appears hardly less so now. West of the town, near the upper edge of a smooth and fertile slope not far from where the woods

began, was a large storage barn where supplies of hay, grain, and vegetables were kept. After hours of commotion, flapping of wings, and snapping of beaks, the storks would fly in family groups, the young brood having been taught by their elders before our eyes, and would congregate in the field in front of this huge barn, where their leaders would line them up and walk up and down between the ranks and files apparently instructing them about the order of the journey. If the young storks were inattentive, the leaders would pick them with their beaks; in one instance, which saddened me for days, the storks all turned upon one of their number, for some reason incomprehensible to me, and killed him with their bills, leaving him dead upon the field as they flew away to the south.

I believe the storks knew the different villagers as the people recognized the storks, for when the huge birds arrived each year they would circle the town together for a long time before each pair settled down to the work of building their nest. Their manner suggested unmistakably a form of greeting to their human friends. They were very tame, mingling often with the hens and doves, and no one would have thought of injuring them, even when they flew away with spoons or spools of thread and hid them in the thatched roofs.

Our lives were so definitely linked with those of the animals and birds and we learned so much from them that I cannot help but think the children of to-day, surrounded by mechanical toys and elaborate machinery, will develop a mentality quite radically different from the generations who shared their labors with patient beasts of burden and their households with living pets. I knew the various horses as individuals and felt a sense of

communication with them. The oxen, sheep, pigs, and goats all impressed their separate characteristics upon me, and I am sure I first began to classify human beings according to their resemblance to various domestic animals. Even the snakes were friendly in Kashoffka, for the houses, built of logs or planks, were very old and in the crevices lived small brightly colored snakes which were tame and harmless. In my first school was one of these pet snakes who used to curl around my ankle sometimes. From the very first, I had a strong sympathy for animals, and although mother told me again and again that I must treat them with understanding, I never had an impulse to do otherwise. I was taught that the beasts had thoughts and a language of their own, and that since God had selected man to rule over all the animal kingdom, any cruelty to animals was unnatural and a sin.

I saw a great deal of brutality, for my brother Sam more than once beat a horse with a chain or a club until it fell over. Fist-fights and free-for-alls were everyday occurrences, and on the very first day I spent in a large city I witnessed scenes of human butchery; but the instinct of cruelty has always seemed to me the most baffling of all human tendencies, and in spite of contrary evidence ranging over my entire lifetime I cannot think of it as a fundamental or natural one. I believe it is a form of nervousness, an oversensitivity of certain areas of the brain.

In vivid contrast to the violent scenes were the evidences of excessive tenderness around me. My mother's indulgence of me was equaled in few of the Jewish families, where a child is always the center of attention, and until he is thirteen years old, when he takes his own sins upon himself (previous to that they are charged up to the parents), parents and grandparents and all the

older brothers and sisters are at his command. The outstanding example of parental solicitude in Kashoffka was the case of Reba, wife of the old man who kept the Krechma, and her grandson, little Puzzia. He, I believe, in any land, would have been the prince of spoiled children, and his well-meaning grandmother, who was such a kind old lady that no one had the heart to hurt her feelings, almost earned for herself the title of Meshuganer (the Crazy), such as David was given. For some reason, nearly all of the members of that family, except Reba and her husband, died in middle age, and that may account for Reba's insane love for her only grandchild. It is needless to say that her adoration of Puzzia was not shared by the boys and girls of the village, and every time he was caught out of Reba's sight he was beaten up, his clothes torn, and his toys or candy taken away.

To the rest of us, Puzzia appeared little out of the ordinary except for one accomplishment which may best be described by reference to the statue of the little boy in Belgium. The exhibition of his outstanding talent became a fixed idea with Puzzia and any unlucky passer-by might be selected by him as a target. In case this party objected to the child's little game, Puzzia would scream for his grandmother, grow red in the face, pound his fists against the dirt, and throw fits for hours at a time. If the cause of Puzzia's outburst were some Jewish neighbor, there was nothing for the dejected old lady to do except try to quiet the boy and divert his mind by the most extravagant promises which she nearly wore herself to shreds in trying to perform. In case Puzzia had singled out one of the poorer peasants, Reba would snatch a few coins from their hiding-place and run after the man and in many cases actually hired him to submit to the child's wishes.

Then Puzzia would smile happily and be in a radiant humor for as much as an hour, when a new fancy would get the better of him.

Another of his amusements was to break windows, and that was easier for Reba to arrange. She would knock timidly at a door, with money in her hand, and beg her neighbor for permission to let Puzzia throw stones through the panes of glass, her face such a picture of anxiety that often the request would be granted, if the weather were not too cold and the glazier were available to replace the broken glass. This odd sport was quite a source of revenue to the glazier, for Puzzia, although in the beginning he had had designs on one window only, when he heard the pleasant tinkle of the glass and was flattered by the accuracy of his aim, nearly always insisted on smashing every window in the house, and the occupant, knowing that Reba would have to spend a whole day in misery if the boy were crossed, sometimes extended the agreement to cover all the glass on the premises.

It was not long before I had a special grudge against Puzzia. One day I was in his house when Reba pulled a fresh batch of baked potatoes from the oven. I was always especially fond of baked potatoes, but mother had counseled me never to ask for things when I was in another person's house; in fact, she had told me to refuse gifts of food which were offered out of politeness, and I was so completely under mother's influence that I tried to please her by respecting her wishes even when she knew nothing about it. Reba, kind-hearted old soul that she was, offered me a potato at once, but I dutifully refused, although my mouth was watering. I saw her hand three or four of them, steaming hot, to Puzzia, who put them in the pocket of his blouse and went out of doors. With

Puzzia, who was slightly younger than I, I had no such scruples as held good with my elders and so I asked him for a potato at once. He refused.

I appeared not to care, for I was very proud, but, knowing how hot the potatoes were, I persuaded him to shut his eyes and take an enormous bite. His shrieks could be heard a mile away, and Reba came running from the house as the neighbors looked out from doors and windows and the drunkards in the Krechma lumbered to the door to see what was wrong. In the confusion I escaped without being blamed for the disaster, but my revenge did not satisfy me. Whether I had heard the old Russian proverb which refers to crying for the moon or the idea occurred to me independently, I cannot say, but at harvest time when the moon rose early, flat and colored like ashes of roses, so near that it seemed more accessible than the nearest town, I took Puzzia aside one evening after school and told him there was a plate in the moon which his grandmother could easily get for him if he insisted on it.

'Ask her,' I said.

Puzzia started for home on the run and I hid near the Krechma to listen. I heard Reba's quavering voice and Puzzia's screams and later was a bit conscience-stricken when she sent for the znacher; but Puzzia could not be dissuaded. He had obtained everything else he had asked for by persistence and violence and he was not going to be side-tracked. Neither obliging peasants nor the largest of windows had any attraction for him then. He wanted the plate in the moon, and when he was quiet enough to come to school, I whispered again in his ear that his grandmother was only fooling him; that there was a plate in the moon and he ought to have it. This went on until Reba was ready to die of grief.

It would seem that I have given a great deal of space to Puzzia, but perhaps after all it is due him, since in his early manhood, after his doting grandmother had mercifully died, Puzzia was led out by a squad of soldiers — I believe they were Russians — placed against a tree in the woods behind the bathhouse, and was shot and left there dead. No one knows just why.

My sister Bessie had gone away to join my father in America, and occasionally we got news of them, but father was more likely to ask about us than to describe in detail what he was doing. I learned later that he was one of the first Jewish builders in Boston and that he conducted several lawsuits successfully himself during the four years he spent there. Just afterward in Kashoffka I had plenty of opportunity to observe his talent for winning legal disputes. I developed no particular longing for America in those days because it was understood that father was to come back to Kashoffka. Our life went on uninterruptedly, with my mother, Feivish, Sam, and I to make up the household. On Saturday, when it was forbidden to do any work, a fine old peasant named Sidder would come to tend the candles and the fires and attend to any odd jobs. He worked for the family for years and was always faithful and obliging, having a special regard for my mother.

After the service in the synagogue on Saturday, a tremendous meal would be served and every one would eat so much that he would have to take a nap afterward. Later in the afternoon, people would visit one another, discuss their affairs, quarrels would be settled, and in the evening plans would be made for the next week.

One of the principal events each Saturday afternoon would be staged by a splendid black stallion owned by the

Obieshtik, a Russian who came to take charge of the vodka when the Government closed the Krechma and stopped the private sale of liquor. The Obieshtik lived not far from David the Meshuganer, in a zone between the dwellings of the Jews and those of the Russians, and brought with him when he came to town an extremely handsome mistress who acted also as his housekeeper. The Obieshtik's horse was one of the most mischievous and intelligent animals I have ever seen, and he seemed to understand the consternation he caused in the village and to enjoy it.

In mid-afternoon each Saturday, about the time the Jews had finished their customary sleep, the Obieshtik would open the stable door. The stallion would be waiting for the moment and would rush out through the town, pawing and snorting, while mothers herded their children indoors and even the grown people ran for cover. The horse would go first to the sanded area in the center and would roll gleefully in the sand, standing up to shake himself occasionally and to make-believe chase any one who dared to show himself. After the horse had amused himself by running in circles for a while, the Obieshtik would come out to play hide and seek with him. No matter where the man would go, the big black horse would find him. If the Obieshtik hid in one of the houses and left the door open, the horse would follow him in, and the occupants would crouch in the corners until he went outdoors again.

One of the things which caused some of our neighbors to prophesy that I would come to a violent end was an attempt I made a few years afterward to ride the Obieshtik's horse. Needless to say, he threw me at least twenty feet, although I was a good bareback rider and had handled

horses always. The only other horse that ever threw me was a trained mule at Austin and Stone's on Tremont Row in Boston; but that is part of another story.

Many things conspired to make me consider myself somewhat solitary — my disinclination to play with younger children, my exceptional progress in the Hebrew school, and above all my overwhelming curiosity. I was so anxious to find out everything that was going on, to see each new thing of which I heard, to understand what people were doing, to explore what lay beyond the small circle of houses which bounded my very first exploits, that I learned quickly to be quiet and inconspicuous. In this way I was able to wander in and out of the houses and the synagogue without attracting much notice, and mother, if she was busy, was not so likely to miss me until I was safely out of sight. The older people, considering me an infant as I was, talked as freely as if I had not been with them, so I heard the whispers of old and recent scandal and was particularly attentive because of the awed and mysterious tones of the women's voices. I listened to the wild stories told by the old soldiers, wedged myself into the crowd when travelers brought news from outside, and on Saturday afternoons listened to the heated arguments which more often than not led to fist-fights and screaming. The significance of some things I overheard was not clear to me at the time, but I remembered nearly everything, and each year I have lived certain of the facts I learned before I was four years old have fitted into a picture completed by recent information or experience. Consequently I am very careful what I say in the presence of children. Those with retentive minds surely think in the manner of adults, although not so well, and those with markedly 'childish' characteristics when

they are young are likely to remain childish through youth and middle age. Beware especially of a child who appears not to be too attentive, for he often has that sort of memory into which things drop softly and rest undisturbed and untarnished for a lifetime.

My passion to know things caused me to collect all sorts of information, like a magpie, and to confide in no one except my mother. She was principally concerned with my actions, whether they were right or wrong, and these I concealed from her only when I thought they would hurt her. She impressed upon me so strongly that I must set an example to less fortunate children that I developed a feeling that every one was watching me, which tended to make me still more reticent.

Even in Kashoffka, where the buzz of the flies in the houses was almost a continual roar in the summer and not more than a dozen people could write their names, there were class distinctions, more rigidly observed sometimes than those in the capitals of the world. Among the Jews, for some reason I could never fathom, the occupation of shoemaker left a man and his family at the very lowest rung of the social ladder. A shoemaker was as far down as he could get and still remain honest and pious. Frequently they were excessively honest and pious, for one of them in Kashoffka, Samuel by name, prayed incessantly as he worked, so that his lips moved in time with his fingers from morning until night. To be a tailor was just a shade less lowly than a shoemaker, but the difference was so slight that the son of the one might marry the daughter of the other without there being any condescension on either side. The very highest peak in the social scale in the Jewish settlement was the old ruv, the venerable and white-haired rabbi of the orthodox syna-

gogue our family attended. He was a small, saint-like man, with silver-white hair and a flowing beard, and skin which was almost pink and transparent. He was known in distant cities and towns for his learning and judgment and held such an eminent position that he was able to marry one of his granddaughters who was almost feeble-minded to a young, intelligent, and distinguished rabbi who was the son of one of the ruv's colleagues. Highest among the laymen of the community were those business men who made money and at the same time observed strictly the Mosaic laws.

The Russian inhabitants had an equally complicated system of classes resting upon the shoulders of the poorest of peasants, who wrapped their feet with bark in the winter and lived in a tiny shack with mud floor and no windows, sharing the limited space with numberless children, a few hens and a pig, to the nobleman whose magnificent orchard across the river attracted my attention before I could walk. The nobleman took no part in the village life, except in certain deals in which he took full advantage of his position, so that the Russian priest was the most exalted personage the peasants could approach. There were no civil officers whatever in Kashoffka except the Obieshtik, who had no police authority, so disputes were settled by fights, and in personal controversies which did not involve public opinion or ecclesiastical notice the stronger always won.

While class distinctions existed, they were sometimes broken down in cases where poor girls had exceptional beauty and poor boys exceptional talent.

Our neighbors avoided the Russian church, turning the other way and whispering prayers when a procession came into sight, but I was too curious to be kept away.

The sound of the chimes and the Easter music, the red, blue, and gold of the dome, and the resplendent banners and costumes of the priest and his assistants when they marched at the head of their congregation on a holiday or in a wedding or funeral party, made me tingle with pleasure, and I would often follow the procession, hiding from tree to tree, to escape the notice of the Jews.

Perhaps it was because of Feivish that I was not afraid of bringing misfortune upon myself and my family by enjoying the colorful manifestations of the Gentiles, or Goyim, as they were called. It was not generally known, but mother and the rest of us were well aware that Feivish and the dyak, or Russian sexton, were friends and that Feivish often visited the dyak secretly. It was thus that I first heard of a piano, although I never saw it nor heard it played. Feivish came home one evening full of enthusiasm for this instrument which he described as a black, oblong box on four legs. If some one touched it, he said, music came out — not just a tune, like a fiddle, but five or six or a dozen notes at the same time. My love for music was first stirred by the sounds from Feivish's fiddle, and just after I started going to school I heard a Pole play on an accordeon one day. The peasants were born with a sense of harmony, some of the girls with clear soprano voices, others with a strong contralto I have never heard equaled in other lands. The men often have natural bass voices. Without the slightest training, they sing the most moving chords, major and minor, and harmonize instinctively, the whole tonal structure resting upon those marvelous firm basses, as solid as the earth and as deep as the sea.

For wedding feasts, sometimes, bands of musicians from other towns would be hired and so I heard groups of instruments consisting of violins, clarinets, 'cello, and

bass viol, very early in life and would stay awake all night if the festivities were in hearing. In the district around Kashoffka there was a queer rivalry between two bands of musicians, one from Kolk and the other from the town of Schklir. If the Kolk crowd was engaged for a celebration and the Schklir musicians got wind of the fact, they would appear also and, installing themselves beneath the windows, would try to drown out their competitors. The resulting din and confusion could be heard all over the village, and nearly always the situation resolved itself into a fight in which not only the performers but the onlookers and wedding guests were sure to be drawn. One of the most effectual of the combatants, while musical means alone were employed, was a strange little old man who played the bass viol for the Schklir orchestra. When in action his elbows were as busy as a field of grasshoppers, and he seemed to be hopping around his huge and ludicrous instrument, sawing out sounds which made one's head vibrate with the heavy strings. In fighting, although his beard reached nearly to his waist and he was near-sighted, the old man did the best he could, and one afternoon I saw him jump up on a chopping-block and lay one of the Kolk performers flat with a blow of the large wooden coffin in which he carried his instrument. The star performers for the Kolk musicians were Morris the fiddler and an old man who played the clarinet.

After years of intense rivalry, involving rough and tumbles all over the Volhynia district and campaigns of price-cutting which made the weddings merrier in many a village, the Kolk and Schklir musicians declared a truce, joined forces and toured the countryside together, so that the superb fiddling of Morris was supplemented by the inspiring grunts of the old man's bass viol from

MORRIS THE FIDDLER

Schklir. At the feasts where the poor and the beggars danced in the open air, the swirling of ragged elbows and the grotesque angles of eloquent knees were spurred on not only by the double orchestra, but by the schnapps and sweet wine which the host distributed to the motley guests. There were lively days and nights, when Kashoffka seemed like one huge family and the daily grind of labor was farther away than the stars. Often the Russians joined in the Jewish festivities, and I remember one wedding celebration, especially merry since both families concerned were Chassidim, where one of the Russian peasants, unable to follow the words of the Yiddish songs, sang alone until Feivish, who understood Russian, caught the tune and made it a duet.

'Since we do not know
Whether or not we shall drink
In the hereafter
Let's drink now, and drink plenty.'

And so my mind, eager to snatch new impressions, was drenched in its formative stage with brilliant colors and music, and although the embroidery on the smocks of the peasant women was patiently sewed through the long winter days by the light of pine knots and the patterns came from their hearts, I find to-day that their art is respected and copied and has spread its influence throughout the western world; the great composers of music have sought their themes in places like Kashoffka and have tried to embellish them without losing their tang of the soil and the open air. Morris with his fiddle, sitting in a dim corner, turned out the raw material for the music of the great concert halls, and the beggars who danced to his tunes were not, in that instance, feeding from the crumbs of the rich man's table, but attending a first per-

formance. Travel the world over, and you will hear no singing like that of the Russians. There, singing is like breathing. Songs flow like rivers and sway like the tops of trees. I have heard them massed in the squares of their large cities, in resplendent uniforms, singing that anthem of another epoch, 'Great God, preserve the Tsar,' and I think no living person, whatever his political tendencies might be, could fail to be awed by the dignity of the performance. I have also heard working men and women, hidden in a deep cellar and with clothes and hair awry, sing the 'Internationale' by the light of a single candle.

The scenes I witnessed before I was old enough to take an active part were not all brightly colored, but the somber ones had a richness which has lost nothing as I look back over many years. In a Jewish household, the most desolate period was that in which a son was approaching the age when he would be called for military service. The Russian law at that time required every man to serve from four to six years, depending upon the district to which he was sent and the farther from home he went the longer his term would be. It was not an aversion to military service which made the Jewish young men and their parents adopt such severe expedients to escape service in the army of the Tsar, but the fact that it would be necessary for them to eat pork and to work on Saturdays. I used to spend many hours in the synagogue when groups of boys who would soon be called for examination were starving themselves and going night after night without sleep in order that they might be underweight or that it would appear that their hearts were weak. The synagogue was built of rough timbers, very old, with wooden benches and tables and heavy iron chandeliers. On one side was a brick wall of the huge stove, and in

cold weather the boys would huddle near this wall, studying to keep awake, repeating prayers and secretly playing a gambling game with small wads of paper for very small stakes. The flickering light from one or two candle-stumps would cause their angular shadows to dance and their emaciated hands and faces to look like disembodied specters in a dim rendezvous. They took extraordinary precautions to keep their games a secret, for the elders would have considered such a sacrilege would bring misfortune upon the entire village and at such a time they needed all the luck there was. The birth and death records were loosely kept at the county seat several days' journey away and the petty officials were all subject to bribery, so that in many cases a boy was passed off as being four or five years older than he actually was, in order that he might be more likely to fail the physical test and in any case might know his fate, and, if successful in evading service, might settle down to a normal life and end the suspense of his parents while still in his teens.

The toughest and healthiest of these young men had the hardest time, for weeks of fasting and sleeplessness would not break down their health sufficiently to assure them of exemption. They would appear fit after the bones of their weaker comrades were almost protruding through the skin, and so were obliged to take sterner measures. They would lift heavy weights in an effort to rupture themselves, and I saw the son of one of our near neighbors climb to the peak of the synagogue roof and jump to the frozen ground in order to cause a hernia which lifting would not produce. In some cases parents would cut off the fingers of their children or gouge out an eye to save them from being forced to abandon the tenets of their religion.

When the day arrived for the young men to go for ex-

amination, the whole village would be in mourning and the synagogues filled with men and women, wailing and lamenting and promising to give all they had to charity if their sons were spared. The candidates were often carried away on stretchers made of twigs and branches or driven away lying prostrate on the floor of a springless farm wagon with solid wooden wheels.

Frequently male children were reported to have died and were kept from the eyes of the authorities until they were old enough to use the passport of some dead person who had performed his military service. This made the traffic in passports a most profitable trade and enriched the officials who had charge of the records or of recruiting. In cases where parents were aged or unable to support themselves, the oldest son was permitted to remain at home except for four weeks each year.

I used to hurry from the primary school to the synagogue to hear the discussions between the older boys who were studying and fasting and in this way picked up an acquaintance with the Torah before I was permitted to read. There were several families whose children were distinguished by their inability to absorb any kind of book learning and these boys attended the class week after week and month after month without being able to retain the first half-dozen letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Some of them were not at all stupid in other respects, but a written sign touched no sympathetic note in their experience and they could not connect it with images or sounds, and even less with the simplest of ideas. A few years after I had entered school I was given a group of backward scholars to help with the alphabet.

'"A" for "apple,"' I would say, pointing to the letter on a large slate. '"B" for "broom."'

But after innumerable explanations and repetitions, when I pointed to the letter 'B' and asked them what it was, they would invariably answer, 'A broom.' And that is as far as we ever could get.

In speaking of the dull boys I tried to teach the alphabet, I must not forget Joseph, the oldest son of Moisha the peddler. The family was always very poor, having only a starved little horse and broken-down wagon in which Moisha traveled from town to town and traded with very small profit. The war wiped out what little they had and drove them from the district. It was decided that the oldest son, Joseph, in spite of the fact that strict religious observance was impossible in America, should come here in order to try to repair the family finances. I met him when he landed and, with a few other old neighbors, tried to get Joseph started in Boston. His mind had not improved since the days when he could get no further than the letter 'B.' We got him a room in the South End, and the moment I saw the gas-jet, I realized that we must impress upon Joseph the necessity of turning it out. I cannot say how many times we instructed him. First, I would do it, and then some of the others would do it, then we insisted upon Joseph's doing it in our presence, and, finally, we thought it safe to leave him. Three days later, he blew out the gas, as he had been in the habit of blowing out the kerosene lamps in Kashoffka, and died very soon afterward in the City Hospital at Boston.

One afternoon, just before the cold weather and the snow made walking difficult in Kashoffka, a man was seen coming toward the village on the road across the river. By the time he had reached the second water mill, every one knew he was a stranger, for we could recognize at a considerable distance the gait and figure of any one

who lived in Kashoffka. This man was tall and lean, and limped along as if he had walked a tremendous distance. Faces began to appear in our neighbors' windows, women put on their shawls and found small reasons for calling next door, men sauntered out to stand in the doorways, while children looked out from behind their kaftans. How news traveled so fast and so surely in the village has always been a mystery to me. Let the slightest thing out of the ordinary take place and the whole circle of houses became slyly animated, shrill voices dropped to a whisper, and the air became electrified. The hens would stop scratching for worms and turn their heads from side to side, apprehensively, and cluck to one another. Old women would begin to tremble.

Before the tall stranger was halfway across the Grabley, it was noticed that his eyes gleamed in a peculiar way and the most curious of the townspeople who had gathered on our side of the dike saw that the man wore spectacles. At once their anxiety disappeared and they became respectful, for the stranger must be a learned man. The only pair of spectacles seen in Kashoffka before that had been perched on the nose of a visiting rabbi renowned for his wisdom and holiness. Nothing was surer, however, than that the stranger was not a rabbi. His coat, too thin for the autumn chill, was patched in fifty places and the soles of his boots were bound with rope to keep them from falling away entirely. His manner contrasted strangely with his apparel and was so dignified that he was greeted with deference and invited to enter many houses. It was four years later that he departed and during that time he had a strong influence over me, for he was my first real teacher.

Schmelik the scribe this man was called. He had not a single kopek when he arrived and the only way in which

he could make a living was to teach Russian. For such a cadaverous man he had a surprisingly deep voice, and the way he roared out the simple Russian verbs in an effort to correct our pronunciation was almost terrifying. There had never been a Russian teacher in Kashoffka before, and the more conservative parents were doubtful as to whether their children should be taught anything besides Hebrew. Mother, with her breadth of sympathy for those in need and her determination that I should have every possible opportunity to learn, settled the question. She sent me to Schmelik as his first pupil, and many others followed her example. For each pupil, Schmelik received about two roubles a year, and finally his class numbered twenty, so that with an income of twenty dollars a year he was able to eat frugally and to sleep indoors, but in no way could he replenish his wardrobe. Kind-hearted housewives gave him odd bits of cloth for patches, and after school hours he could be seen sitting in the doorway taking advantage of the last gleam of twilight in order to sew another patch on his motley kaftan. He brushed the dirt from his clothes, however, and preserved a kind of neatness which he was careful to exact from his pupils.

'It is better to have fifty clean patches than one dirty coat,' he said.

Schmelik had some skin disease which kept him itching continually, and so, as he read the lessons, he would lean against a large upright timber which extended from the floor of the schoolroom to the peak of the roof, scratching his back by swaying from side to side, while his hands held the book and his spectacles were focused upon the text.

Whether in his long stay at Kashoffka he let drop a word or two concerning his past, or whether some other traveler recognized him and told his story to the villagers,

I do not know, but in time it was generally believed that Schmelik had left home because of some trouble with his wife. There was no doubt he had lived in the city and had been in touch with the affairs of the world. His bearing indicated that he had not always been poor and solitary. Whatever was the nature of the grief which drove him out across the land, he supported it without loss of dignity, and I am sure the same reasons which landed him in our remote little town eventually drew him away. He came in the autumn and left in the spring of another year, so I always associate his lanky form with bleak fields and bare trees, and I hope, whenever I think of him, that he found peace at last.

It may not be understood, by those unfamiliar with the ways of Polish and Russian villages at the close of the last century, that in permitting me to go to a Russian teacher mother was taking a broad-minded and courageous stand. She was known throughout the village as one of the most pious women. She observed religious laws most scrupulously. She knew that, in supporting the idea of a broader culture, many of the neighbors who looked to her for guidance would follow her example. The more I reflect upon her actions, the more astonished I am at the tolerance and foresight she displayed. Her life was spent in obscure places, her daily tasks were often humble ones, but she seemed to be able to sort out healthy spiritual tendencies from injurious ones with the surest instinct, and the principles which guided her life I have found inspiring and helpful under conditions she could never have imagined. Hers was a native wisdom, a pure, unselfish heart. She will always personify for me the better side of life, and lend a beauty to my memories of Russia which none of the hardships or squalor can obliterate.

The winters in Kashoffka were long and the vast circle bounded by the forests of oak and evergreen lay white and still. On stormy nights the wind swept over the village and drifted the snow to the tops of the doors and windows, while the cold caused boards to snap and the animals in the sheds to huddle together. The rivers were frozen solid, so that the few sleighs which entered the town were not obliged to go the long way around the Grabley, but could branch off from the crossroads by the old water mill. The sun, when infrequently it showed itself, was distant and cold, pale yellow like the moon or an angry red; it dropped out of sight in mid-afternoon and the darkness followed precipitously. In the channel of the larger river a hidden stream crept beneath the thick ice and, after dark, lanterns would twinkle by the holes which the fishermen cut. A few of the peasants went into the forest to cut firewood, and if they returned a little late, the eyes of wolves and the snapping of twigs followed them furtively along the way. Sometimes, if the winter was especially severe and the wolves were lean with hunger, they would attack a man or a horse and a few of the peasants lost their lives that way.

Fur was cheap and plentiful, for the streams were inhabited by mink and beaver and the forests by foxes, wild-cats, and wolves. Peasants who ventured out-of-doors were almost hidden in their black fur caps and high fur collars and the women kept the spinning-wheels clattering or sewed the tough pelts into garments.

The interval between winter and spring was an unlucky one, and every one dreaded its approach and was glad when it was over. The whiteness of the snow gave way to mud, first on the roadways and then wherever the ground was low. The ice grew treacherous, then began to

creak and groan and, usually during the night, with reports like cannon, it broke up and commenced to flow, clogged up with slush, with a constant, swishing sound. The flood rose higher and higher until the rivers overflowed their banks and tore on with increasing speed, carrying trees away and undermining houses. The dampness in the air at the time of the freshets was thought to breed disease, and all sorts of ailments broke out. Mother, whose health had not been good since long before I was born, would be troubled by a terrible cough in spring and often would be obliged to stay in bed for days. Jews and peasants alike would pray for her recovery.

She was so patient and uncomplaining that I did not realize until I was full grown how much she missed my father during those four years, nor how much her anxiety was stirred by the whispering of our neighbors about the laxity of religious observances in America. Her loneliness she expressed only in a song which she used to sing to me at night and from which, as I have already mentioned, I obtained my first idea of America as a very distant place and of my father as a person far away. When word came that father was to return, there was a strenuous period of preparation, the walls, tables, and chairs were scrubbed, and everything given a festive air, but the letter did not state when he would arrive. Means of transportation were uncertain and it was, moreover, considered very unlucky to anticipate a future happy event. Such a thought implied a slight insubordination to the will of God and an arrogance which might bring on disaster. So after the house was cleaned, there was a long period of suspense in which mother's eyes wandered always toward the Grabley when she thought no one was looking at her. For the first time in my life, I was enjoying the thrill of looking

forward to a truly important event. The fact that my father had traveled had given me an advantage over my schoolmates, and this was considerably strengthened by the rumor that he was to return with a fortune. My excitement was so great that it seems to mark the beginning of a definite epoch in my development, when I began to be more conscious of myself as an active rather than a passive person. The interval between father's letter and his appearance was so long, however, that the pitch of my expectations descended gradually, and when actually I saw my father, it took me almost as much by surprise as if I had not heard he was on his way.

As I was leaving school one afternoon, I saw that every one in town was hurrying toward the Grabley, and at the same moment a man grabbed me and started carrying me toward the Grabley, stuttering: 'Your father is here! Your father is here!'

I have a confused recollection of running to the scene, as a wagon made its way across the last bridge and was stopped by an excited crowd. First I recognized my sister Bessie, who was almost forgotten in the commotion, and as soon as the wagon halted, I saw a tall, handsome man jump down to greet my mother. To any one not acquainted with Jewish customs, the greeting would no doubt have seemed extraordinarily restrained, for any public display of affection between husband and wife was held in Kashoffka to be immodest and in bad form. I pushed through the outer circle of onlookers and mother caught me up and passed me to my father.

'How are you, my Kaddish?' he asked.

'If I had one more like me, I could beat up all the boys in town,' I am reported to have said.

I could sense that the cordiality of the greeting given

my father by his neighbors was tinged with misgivings, even before we had left the Grabley.

'He is dressed like a Goy,' some one whispered, and the heads began to wag, for my father was wearing the first derby hat ever seen in Kashoffka, a stiff white collar with a black, made-up tie, and, instead of a blouse and kaftan, he wore a black American coat reaching halfway to his knees. Worse than all that, his wiry red beard had been chewed off short. Shaving or shearing was forbidden, but the Talmud said nothing about biting off the end of one's beard with one's teeth.

Although I am sure my father told no one how much money he had brought with him, before we had reached the house it was whispered about the village that Nathan the Wise, as he was called, had made six thousand roubles in America, and that amount was very nearly correct. Six thousand roubles was unprecedented wealth in that town, and the respect which money inspires served to counteract the bad impression made by father's clothes. Before he had time to sit down, he was talking of plans for starting new schemes of industry and introducing to Kashoffka some American ideas. From that moment, there was no lack of activity in our household. As the rule of life before had been tranquillity, with the seasons' deliberate round and the Sabbath the only day which differed from the others, after father returned, our normal state was one of excitement, controversy, and achievement. I was too impressionable not to be affected by this change and my nerves were keyed up to a high tension; in fact, have been so ever since. I inherited a large supply of energy from my father, whose powerful physique and hearty voice gave him a distinct air of authority, and my oversensitive nervous system from my mother's side

caused me from the very beginning to burn my energy to the limit. I had no inclination to be idle and very little opportunity. A portion of mother's attention, which hitherto had been devoted to me, was transferred to my father, so that it was easier for me to escape from the house and to hear and see whatever was going on. I enjoyed the two kinds of esteem earned for us by my parents and was a privileged character throughout the village. If this situation had continued during my entire youth, it might have resulted harmfully. As it was so radically counteracted later on, my childish pride and happiness have helped rather than hindered me.

At that time, Kashoffka was more than ever like one large family, so that every one knew everybody else's business and talked about it. The slightest happening was remarked and commented on.

One of the men who knew all the interior scandals was Morris the bathman, whom I have described as a white-bearded giant afraid of no one on earth. The Mosaic law requires all women to take a bath before intercourse with their husbands. Morris was in the habit of starting up his fire when he sighted any of his neighbors returning from a long journey. The water was heated by means of stones, which first were placed in the fire. Friday was the day reserved for men, and the whole male population gathered in the bathhouse, steaming themselves and beating themselves with long brushes made of twigs, while Morris fed the stove and told stories. He had no end of stories to tell, since he was one of the several so-called 'soldiers of Nicholas' who, after having been kidnaped in his youth, had spent twenty-five years in the Russian army.

Under Tsar Nicholas I, recruiting officers were hired to go from one remote village to another stealing promising-

looking boys for the military service, and were paid according to the number of boys they secured. The practice had been discontinued several years before I was born, but several old men were yet alive who had been the victims of that system. Twenty-five years of army life, where they were fed and clothed by the Tsar and had neither civic nor family ties nor responsibility, had made the 'soldiers of Nicholas' a daring and happy-go-lucky lot; and, when finally they were released and given a small pension, they would settle down to spend their old age in some village which took their fancy, not knowing where they had been born and long before having ceased to care. Morris was eighty years old or more, but when Old Doody or Reba, who kept the Krechma, were in trouble, they would call upon Morris for help; and I have seen him, club in hand and white hair streaming, scatter thirty or forty drunken men as if they were so many chickens. He was kind to children, however, and would let me sit around and listen to countless stories he assumed I did not understand, and in this way I have become the custodian of many secrets and intrigues which otherwise would have died with Morris. The old bathman, by reason of his occupation, knew the natures and dispositions of the men and women obliged by the tenets of religion to patronize him, and he would often comment laughingly upon the differences between one and another. Not only did he know what took place under the sanction of matrimony, but so many of the simple-minded women in breaking one kind of law were afraid to add to it the disregard for another that Morris was aware of many clandestine romances as well. With regard to these wayward affairs Morris was usually discreet, since he received a small fee for his services and wished to do nothing

to discourage the women from coming to his establishment.

It was not often that Doody, the keeper of the tavern, was obliged to call on Morris for help, for the whole town respected the innkeeper, who was honorable, good-natured, charitable, and very pious. He kept the commandments and religious laws and made a living until the Government took away from him the right to sell vodka. Of course, the Chassid doctrine that God loves a laugh and a smiling countenance did a great deal to help the sale of vodka. Drinking induced merriment and merriment was pleasing to the Most High. Therefore drink! Such was the reasoning. When the peasants or the Chassidim would become hilarious, Doody would speak gently to them, and usually they would do as he asked.

Doody used to come to our house often and at one time was almost a partner to my father, who was to use his barns and house in connection with the building of our house and mill which played such an important part in my life after father's return. I was always glad to see Doody approach, for in his quiet, dignified way he used to tell all sorts of tales about devils, spirits, and miracles. One of his favorite stories was about Trisher, a Chassid tzaddik, or wonder-worker, whom I never saw because he lived before my time. Trisher had many followers, however, and stories of his many miracles survived him. Once he stopped a tremendous fire by merely raising his hands to Heaven. On another occasion he stopped a plague which was prevalent among the cattle by going out into the surrounding pastures to bless the beasts which had not been infected. One of Doody's friends had, in the days of Trisher, been falsely accused of having stolen some oxen. They hired the best pleader they could find, but he

gave up the case as hopeless. Finally they went to Trisher the rabbi, and after hearing their story, he told them to go away and be confident that everything would turn out all right. No matter what they saw, he said, they were to say nothing. The day of the trial came, and just before the case was about to be called, Doody said that he saw Trisher enter like a vision, dressed in his impressive vestments usually reserved for the high holidays or for the celebration in honor of the full moon. The rabbi opened the book to the page where the claim against Doody's friend was set forth, tore out the page and walked away with it. Later the defendant was discharged, because no record could be found of the claim against him.

The principal worry of Doody's was that little Puzzia, whom I have already mentioned, would die, since the old innkeeper believed in common with his neighbors that God takes away those dearest to the pious in order to test their faith. For that reason his face was nearly always plaintive and mournful, like that of his wife Reba. Unfortunately, as I have related, all their fears for the future of their beloved grandchild were well grounded.

The memory of Doody and old Morris the bathman recalls to me that of Charton the podrizer, a peasant who had made it a practice to terrify the village whenever he took a fancy, drunk or sober. Morris was the only man who was not afraid of Charton, before father returned from America. Charton lived two or three miles outside the town, but, instead of taking care of his farm and working as others did, he would break into houses in broad daylight and take whatever he could lay his hands on. Neither man nor woman dared to raise the slightest objection, for if they did he would break up all the furniture and the windows and beat up everybody on the premises.

He was not content with taking things he needed, but, enjoying the consternation his appearance caused, he would defy the whole village and chase any one indoors who stuck his head from a doorway. There were three large wells in Kashoffka, from which the buckets were raised by long wooden levers, and since the river water tasted fishy, the water supply of the entire town came from the wells. Charton, after he had driven everybody into hiding, would break the levers of the wells and let the buckets drop down to the bottom. Often he would publicly pollute the water, roaring out oaths and threats as he did so. One of his tricks was to rip the doors from the houses, especially in cold weather, or to tie two cats' tails together and sling them over a clothesline. He was as brutal to animals as to men, and for years had bullied the countryside.

When a woman would see Charton approaching the town, she would begin to wail and tremble and a hush would come over Kashoffka as every one started to hide his valuables and bar his door. There was no police authority to whom an appeal could be made and no one dared resist for fear of losing his life. Not long after father returned, Charton no doubt heard that he had brought back a fortune and the deference father received from the peasants angered him and urged him to show his defiance. One Friday, as we were singing the Psalms we heard some neighbors crying that Charton was coming. This time Charton did not wreck the levers on the wells nor pay any attention to the frightened women. He walked boldly up to our house, threw open the door, entered, and started to gather up the silverware from the table and throw it into a sack. Father, who was as tall and broad-shouldered as Charton, sprang up and told him to drop what he had

taken and get out. At this the peasant kicked over the table and began to break up a chair. Father grabbed him by the throat, and while mother, Bessie, Feivish, Sam, and I tried to get out of the way, they struggled in the doorway, pounding each other in the head and body, kicking with heavy boots and grunting when the blows landed. Charton had not expected to be attacked, and so father had a slight advantage from the start. He forced the swearing peasant through the doorway and finally knocked him down and beat him up so badly that he had to be carried home, and he remained in bed for days. The whole town rejoiced and father had more prestige than ever.

It was known that Charton was associated with a gang of thieves and mother was afraid they would waylay father and kill him. In fact, as soon as Charton was able to leave his house, he came again to threaten father, this time armed with a heavy club. There was no fight on this occasion, for Feivish, wishing to end all danger from the gang, appealed to Yashka the fisherman and Charton was persuaded to let us alone. He had burned many houses and barns and it was known that he would stop at nothing. He was always careful not to disturb Morris the bathman, who I still believe was seven feet tall, but his docility in the hands of Yashka the fisherman was harder to explain and surely did not result from fear.

Yashka's position in the community was a strange one, never actually defined, yet every one knew when to ask his advice and how to interpret his non-committal acts or gestures. He was a small, bland old man with an effeminate lisp and manner, and nothing took place within Kashoffka's wooded horizon, legal or illegal, that Yashka did not know about. If anything was stolen and all ordinary

efforts to find it failed, the owner would go to Yashka and tell him the story, knowing all the time that Yashka knew more about it than he did. Yashka would wring his hands and nod his head sympathetically and say it was too bad, and perhaps that is all that would be accomplished on the first visit. The next time, if the owner remarked that he would be so glad to get back his property that he would pay a small sum and ask no questions as to how it had disappeared, Yashka would be just a shade more responsive, and in a day or two would suggest to the owner that he look in such and such a hollow tree or in a certain clump of underbrush. Charton would always listen to Yashka's advice, and in our case the fisherman urged him not to insult or anger my father again, for Feivish had explained that father was not at all afraid to drive to the town where the Rotnik lived and ask that the whole gang be sent to jail. Up to that time, the people of Kashoffka had been more afraid of the Rotnik than of the bandits, but father had imbibed the idea of police protection and courts of justice in Boston and introduced it as an innovation in the village. Yashka was quick to see its unfortunate possibilities.

Father had an encounter with the Rotnik sooner than he had expected and without a chance to take the initiative. It was on the occasion of my sister Bessie's marriage to Feivish. She had been brought up partly under his direction and had always loved and respected him for his kindness and intelligence. The only question was the difference in their ages, and there was considerable discussion at home and in the synagogue on that point, which was finally settled in Feivish's favor. One of the principal things I remember about the preparations for any kind of feast or long journey is the smell of the baking which went

on for days. All kinds of cakes, tarts, and fancy bread were cooked in the large brick oven, fish were brought from the river and stuffed, fowl were killed and passed upon by the rabbi, meats were roasted, wine was poured, relatives and friends began to arrive on foot and in wagons, neighbors ran in and out to help and to gossip about good or evil omens and our house became the center of attraction. Mother was busy directing the women and making the delicacies she would entrust to no one else and father strode back and forth through the town with an air of prosperity and importance. He had become the village oracle and was consulted on matters of business and personal affairs, was asked to settle disputes, and above all to tell what he had seen on his travels. This he did with a keen dramatic sense and certainly with no inclination to make things appear less colorful than they were.

Bessie was a very pretty girl, mild and gentle in her disposition and was glad to be marrying Feivish rather than a stranger. She must have been about sixteen years old. Although she had spent two years in America, it had made little impression upon her; at least she was able to tell very little about it. The signs seemed to point to good fortune in the marriage until, on the day before the ceremony was to take place, the Rotnik arrived. Just before him came the musicians from Kolk which we had chosen in preference to the Schklir orchestra.

At the sight of the Rotnik, the gayety hushed down. The women, who had been hurrying from door to door, slunk quietly home and the men looked at one another silently, wagging their heads from side to side and clucking with dismay. Mother remained calm and tried to keep Bessie's spirits from being dampened, and father, with a show of bravado, kept right on with what he was doing and pretended to pay no attention to the official's visit.

There was a well-to-do and educated man named Ilchichky who had brought his family to Kashoffka a few years before and who had carefully guarded all information as to where he came from in spite of the curiosity of the neighbors. He had several handsome daughters and two sons and the whole household had an air of gayety about it which exceeded the bounds of what was considered proper in the town. Accordeon music could be heard through the cracks in the doorway late at night, the daughters walked openly through the woods and fields with young men who came to visit them from out of town, large quantities of vodka and wine went in at the front door and stacks of bottles were thrown out back. This man was father's principal rival; although the family was Jewish, none of its members were strict in their observances of religion. The Rotnik was very friendly to this family and usually stayed at their house when he remained in Kashoffka overnight. On the afternoon in question, the Rotnik did not trouble himself to inspect the town and, while prayers were being offered in three synagogues that nothing should happen to anger him, he was enjoying himself in the company of the man I have mentioned and his sons and daughters. Sounds of hilarity reached the near-by houses.

In the evening Bessie's wedding feast began, the Kolk musicians, after having made inquiries to ascertain whether their rivals were on the road, tuned up their instruments, and the guests, encouraged by the wine, began to forget the Rotnik was near by. Old Morris the fiddler stood upon his chair and sounded the first chord. For once, Bessie was the one to receive all the attention. Her long yellow hair hung in heavy braids over her shoulders for the last time, since, according to custom, it would be

cut off short on the day of her marriage and henceforth she would wear the wig all married women wore.

Before the festivities were fairly started, the Rotnik ap peared in the doorway, slightly drunk. He was chagrined because father had not invited him. The music stopped and everybody stood still, but he motioned for the musicians to go on. Even in a room where every one was dressed in holiday attire, the Rotnik's uniform made the rest look colorless and somber. His riding-boots of black patent leather were polished like mirrors, his flaring red trousers were neatly creased, his sword and scabbard were embossed and ornamented, and his shoulders and cap were loaded down with gilt epaulettes and gold and silver braid. When the dancing started up again, he strode across the room to where Bessie was seated and asked her to dance with him. Bessie, frightened half to death, refused and tried to get away.

In an instant the Rotnik became angry. After roaring and threatening the whole company, he ordered the musicians to pack up their instruments and follow him. They were too frightened to refuse. It was unheard of that any one should disobey the Rotnik. He led them away to Ilchichky's house and made them play there, while he danced with the daughters and drank with the father. At our house, all had turned to gloom. The guests expected to be beaten or arrested. Every one was fearful as to what might happen to Bessie. Old women began to shake their heads and moan, for such an occurrence on the eve of a wedding could mean only that the pair were marked out for misfortune.

Just then father added to the prevailing terror by starting out in the direction of the house where the Rotnik was carousing. He knocked on the door, demanded to talk

with the official, and told the Rotnik that if he did not return the musicians he would make a complaint to the Governor of the province. Faced for the first time with defiance, the Rotnik did not know just how to proceed. If father had been a poor man or a peasant, the Rotnik would have whipped him until he was unconscious and then kicked his face, but the official had by that time heard that father had been in America and had made a huge amount of money, and a rotnik is just as much in awe of a higher official as a peasant is of a rotnik. At any rate, the musicians were sent back to our house and the interrupted celebration was continued. Of course, the prestige father had earned by subduing Charton the podrizer was more than trebled by his defiance of the Rotnik.

When a Jewish girl was married in Kashoffka and the relatives of the bridegroom came from another locality, these relatives or 'machitoonim' as they were called, were expected to arrive in style. The more important the wedding, the more pompous would be the entrance of the relatives and guests. On the day they were expected, the children of Kashoffka would watch the Grabley and when the first wagon appeared would run through the streets shouting:

'The machitoonim are coming! The machitoonim are coming!'

That would be the signal for every one to rush to the Grabley to greet the guests. If the principals of the wedding were very poor, the relatives would be seated in ordinary wagons with horses, perhaps, which did not show signs of overfeeding and the effect would be drab, as events in the lives of the poor are likely to be. However, if things had gone a little better with the parents of the bride and groom, the horses would wear ornamental

collars and the number and style of the wagons would be larger and more sightly. There might be hay in the wagons for the guests to sit upon, and in that case the men and women would exhibit the proper degree of dignity as they crossed the dike and entered the limits of the town. Should the families to be united occupy a level slightly higher, the sound of bells and the cracking of whips would accompany the hoofbeats and shouts of greeting, and colored streamers would flutter in the wind, for the most important arrivals would be met on the Grabley by musicians and escorted into town.

As the guests descended from the wagons, tremendous confusion would ensue as old friends and relatives embraced one another. Very often the bride and groom would get their first glance at one another at the ceremony, for it was the custom for the parents, through a matchmaker, to arrange the wedding and the young people were obliged to trust to the judgment of their elders as to a suitable mate.

I can see now a wedding party riding into Kashoffka, the horses excited by the noise and the speed, the guests bouncing up and down on the floor of the wagons, the arched collars and flying ribbons. As the leader dipped gayly into a ravine, the end of the cavalcade might be sliding over the crest of a hill, and so the file of bedecked vehicles undulated and streamed across the beauteous countryside. How magnificently the trees of the Grabley bowed to offer their archway to the incoming revelers! How the children screamed happily and the old folks wagged their heads! Old grudges between relatives were laid aside until the festivities were over. The sound of music burst from the walls, to enliven the town. Peasants leaned upon their forks and shovels, pausing to salute the

strangers. Who rides now upon those hillsides? What journeys from strange continents and even from the other world would have to be undertaken to bring a single one of those groups together to-day? I wonder how many others have these pictures enshrined within their hearts, how many of my former countrymen could bring forth memories equally bright to enrich my own? The world has followed its predestined orbit many times around the sun since then and the inhabitants of the globe have been shaken and scattered from place to place like crumbs upon a tilted plate. Yet those simple people knew nothing of the world's revolutions and in the Cheder no talk of the earth moving around the sun would have been allowed.

One of the important features of a festive wedding was the butchin, or improviser, a witty man who stood upon the table, and, as the music played, gayly made up jests and stories in keeping with its mood, calling into play the people around him and the quick circumstances which brought the thoughts to his mind. When the music veered to the minor, as in Russia it does so frequently, this master of ceremonies would bring tears to the eyes of the orphans, if there were any present, by a reference to the dead, or if there were no orphans, would speak of that misery and death which hover always out of sight in the atmosphere. Full play was given to all sorts of moods. There was never a wedding without mingled tears and rejoicing.

Kashoffka had no butchin, and so, for Bessie's wedding, a man was imported from a distant town and worked with the Kolk musicians.

After father's defiance of the Rotnik, many of our neighbors would come to him for advice and protection when they were in trouble with the authorities. One case comes to my mind which he settled by diplomacy. The

inhabitants of the district chose ten men of each hundred to act as satniks, or deputies to do odd jobs and errands ordered by the Rotnik. Three of the satniks, two Russians and one Jew, would be assigned each night in turn to guard the village, and when men were sent away under arrest two satniks would have to accompany them. The Rotnik arrived in Kashoffka one day on his way to a town about thirty miles distant where he was to arrest a man. Preferring to stop with his usual host and enjoy the gay company there, the Rotnik summoned a satnik named Ivan and ordered him to go to such and such a town and bring back the man who was wanted. Ivan set out on foot and walked the thirty miles, but when he arrived at the other town and inquired for his man, he was directed to a tumble-down house on the edge of the village and through a broken window he saw the fellow sitting with his feet on a table and a bottle of vodka two thirds drained in one hand. The man, who had committed several thefts in broad daylight after the manner of Charton, was more than six feet tall, with shoulders like a bear. Ivan was not more than five feet six and of an especially mild disposition. He looked wistfully through the window, decided not to disturb the outlaw, and walked back thirty dreary miles to Kashoffka, where he sought out the Rotnik, saluted as many as a dozen times with a most apologetic air, and said that he had been to the town in question, but had not been able to find the man. As Ivan stood there at attention, the Rotnik struck him two quick and heavy blows one on each side of the face and, turning him around, kicked him through the door, saying: 'You heard my orders. Now get the man, do you understand?'

When Ivan's head stopped roaring, he found himself on

the way back to the outlaw's village and all the way he tried to bring his courage to the necessary point to tell the six-foot drunkard that he was under arrest. He knew the Rotnik would break all his bones if he returned the second time empty-handed. So he approached the tumble-down house with chattering teeth and tried to persuade the man to come along with him. This time he returned to Kashoffka with two black eyes nearly swollen shut and the flap of one ear chewed off. He slunk in at night, so that the Rotnik might not see him, and made his way to our house to beg father to intercede for him. The next day father drove with him over the thirty-mile route he had made twice already on foot and persuaded the outlaw, who had got sober in the mean time, to come back with them to Kashoffka and give himself up. If he came peaceably, father argued, things would go much easier with him, but if he resisted arrest the Government would hunt him down and punish him much more severely. So the next evening Ivan tapped fearfully on the door of the house where the Rotnik was still enjoying himself heartily and handed over his prisoner.

We were still living in Schloime Gimbel's house, and I think father's prosperity excited Schloime's imagination and made him decide quite suddenly that he himself would go to America. (Schloime is the junkman I spoke about who is now in Framingham, carrying on a considerable business with the aid of his sons and grandsons.) He was known in Kashoffka as a 'ploot,' that is, a man who says a great deal on slight provocation and then forgets it when he has cooled off. One Saturday evening he told father of his decision, said that he had only one hundred roubles and asked to borrow twenty-five to cover his expenses. Father had little confidence in

Schloime, I believe, for he refused to lend the money, and Schloime got so angry that on Monday, while father was away, he took all the window glass from the house in which we were living, tied it into a package which he slung over his back, and started on the road toward Roshist, in the general direction of the railroad. The wind blew through our crowded rooms and mother did not know what to do in father's absence. Schloime walked on, with the awkward load of glass upon his back, but as his legs grew wearier and his brain more clear, he began to think he had done wrong, that he had no right to take out our windows even though he owned the house; so, after hiking fifteen miles he turned back toward Kashoffka and, when he arrived, without a word and pretending not to notice that any one was watching him, Schloime got some putty and a knife and one by one replaced the window-panes he had taken out in anger. Soon afterward he got the money necessary for the voyage to America, from father or some one else, and set out. As I remarked farther back in my story, thirty-five years in this country have changed him very little. He is still tall and stalwart, with few gray hairs, and he works leisurely around his back yard, which is piled high with old iron, bales of rags and newspapers, from early morning until it grows dark each day.

Four months after father's return, we left Schloime Gimbel's house and rented a part of the house in which David the miller lived, where father planned to stay until he could build a large house for himself, with sheds and machinery for combing wool, refining linseed oil, chopping fodder, and similar activities. We were more comfortable in David's house, although David was very much more eccentric than Schloime; his principal claim to

fame was that he was not afraid to sleep alone in the mill. Before any of father's new enterprises materialized, a disaster swept suddenly down upon Kashoffka which brought upon us the hardest times our family had seen since my birth and in which father's six thousand roubles gave him little advantage over his poorer neighbors. All Kashoffka's disasters seemed to come like sudden storms, overclouding the sky and beating down upon the village like hailstones, without warning, and, in so far as the townspeople were concerned, without explanation. The punishment of God was always the cause to which misfortune was attributed, and every one searched his mind for acts which might have prompted the Deity to smite the whole community.

In a village about a day's journey away one of our distant relatives, who was also related to some of our neighbors, was to be married and several guests from Kashoffka set out together in wagons to attend the wedding. I was left at home on this occasion, but mother and father went. Many who would like to have gone were kept at home by work or illness, so one of the women brought back a large piece of the wedding cake to be divided and distributed among the friends of the bride who were unable to be present at the feast. Accordingly, the cake was cut and taken from house to house. It was not known at that time that there was cholera in the village where the wedding had taken place, but within two or three days a case broke out in one of the families to which the cake had been sent. Many of the villagers recognized the symptoms of the disease, having lived through a previous plague years before. At once all activity was stopped and the whole town was given up to prayer and lamentations. The znacher was beset for po-

tions and charms, women ran with their children to gypsies and Poles who were thought to have magic powers, the bell in the dome of the Russian church tolled for the first victims among the peasants, and, before any one had fully realized what had happened, men, women, and children were falling sick on all sides. A cattle dealer, driving a herd of steers, attempted to cross the Grabley and was told that the plague was raging. In this way the news spread to another town and from there around the countryside generally.

I cannot describe the impression made upon me by this sudden feeling of death in the air. After a day or two I could scarcely recall how the village had seemed in happier days. The streets and the sanded circle were deserted, the doors and windows of all the houses tightly shut, and all the faces which appeared were disfigured with terror and grief. Neglected animals lowed and whined in the sheds, the scavenging pigs grew ferocious. If the sun shone, its light seemed to have a false and menacing quality, and in bad weather the howl of the wind was like the voices of demons whispering and shrieking in the chimney-tops. When another death occurred, if it was in our part of the village, the wailing and moaning would reach us faintly. In our tightly closed rooms, where we ate and slept and waited without a breath of fresh air, a drowsiness and indifference crept over me and I was anxious to end it, even at the risk of death.

My mother, who had lost five children in the previous epidemic, watched me tremulously wherever I went, moving her lips in incessant prayer that I should be spared. I realized that her fears were centered on me, but I did not understand the situation well enough to be afraid. I suffered from the tension of all the nerves

around me, the fear and bewilderment in the people I had always looked to for guidance.

The plague was of a virulent type which caused death within a few days after the first symptoms appeared, and before the first week was out the church bells rang continuously and furtive groups made their way to the cemeteries, carrying rough coffins. Before long, attempts at burial had to be given up, since the grave-diggers could not work fast enough and many of them were infected. On a Friday, late in the afternoon, a man tapped at our window, which was nailed down to prevent any contact with the outside, and asked to speak with Feivish. One of Feivish's friends was sick, the person who had been caring for him had died, and in his delirium the sick man had been calling for Feivish.

This was one of the few occasions on which Feivish, so gentle and mild-mannered by nature, opposed the wishes of my father. I remember the discussion, my sister Bessie's terror at the idea that he should go out, my father's heated argument, my mother's silent approval of what Feivish was bound to do. He unbarred the door and set out for the house in which his friend was lying, having repeated over and over again in answer to no matter what the others would say to deter him: 'If it is the will of God that I shall die, I shall die, here or elsewhere. Otherwise, not.'

Feivish no sooner reached his friend's bedside and started to do what he could to make him comfortable than the man turned purplish-black and died. Father would not let Feivish come back into the house. The same afternoon another incident occurred which further unnerved my parents. Since the outbreak of the plague, all the people, terrified, superstitious, and cooped up in

their shabby houses, had been trying to find a cause for the punishment God had visited upon the village, to unearth a sin sufficiently deadly to warrant the scourge of cholera. Finally, one of the old women had confessed she had seen a boy committing an unnatural act with a cow. The boy had admitted his guilt, and his father, seizing a sickle which was hanging upon the wall, had driven him out of doors. He already was infected with the cholera and died in the street, within sight of our window. The wave of superstitious horror which swept over Kashoffka could be felt no matter how tightly the doors were barred.

News traveled almost as quickly then as it did under normal conditions. It was necessary for men and women to go out occasionally to draw water at the well, and the burial parties often passed one another on their way to and from the cemeteries. Communication by means of gestures and signs was possible through the closed windows.

No attempt was made to bury the body of the boy and, with such a frightful sin to answer for, the stricken people of Kashoffka had little hope that any of them would be spared. New victims shrieked and tore their hair. The dying moaned, gasped, and turned purple. Father, who had kept fairly calm up to that day, suddenly decided that we must leave town at once, and, although it meant traveling on the Sabbath, mother agreed, with some misgiving, that it was justified. On her own account, perhaps, she would have waited another day, but the prospect of taking me to a place less dangerous outweighed everything else in her mind.

Just after twilight, the wagon was ready and with what few things could be taken along for our comfort we set out through the dismal street. We had waited until dark

so that our neighbors would not be shocked by our violation of the Sabbath and blame us for bringing further punishment upon them, but, in all probability, every one knew and others would have followed us if they had had the means or had known where to go. And to them it seemed useless to attempt to escape the wrath of the Almighty. I shall never forget the faces of my parents as we started on that journey, harassed by centuries of race memories of pestilence and flight. The air smelled of death so that I was afraid to breathe deeply. The land was dark, like a dead man's skin, and the village a sore upon it.

Mother was quite calm, I remember, and solicitous for us all. Sam was uneasy, moving his hands and feet incessantly, looking up, then down again without meeting our eyes, but he said nothing. We jolted past the synagogue, the residence of the ruv, of the priest and the dyak, and crossed the Grabley over which no wagon had gone for many days. Not even father knew where we were going, but we drove all night, and in the early morning approached a strange village in which the men and women were already stirring. At the first house the people threw up their hands at the sight of us and began to scream. Others ran away and stood at a distance, menacing us. They knew we were from Kashoffka and that the plague was there.

There was nothing to do but travel on, for we might easily have been killed if we had attempted to stay. We drove back to a road which skirted the town, and continued on our way until late afternoon, when we met the same reception at the second village we tried. A mile or two outside this town, however, we found a deserted barn and took possession of it, installing the horse in one

corner and ourselves in another. Sam built a fire outside and we had hot food for the first time since we had left Kashoffka. In the morning a few peasants appeared at a safe distance and motioned as if to drive us away, but father showed them a handful of coins which glittered so temptingly that they decided to let us stay in the barn.

By means of signs it was agreed that the peasants should bring what we needed and leave it on a large flat rock two hundred yards away and that after they had had time to get away, father should leave the money on another rock near by. Even with those precautions the peasants were at first afraid to pick up the coins. They brought a znacher from the village and while they crossed themselves and spat over their shoulders he pronounced an incantation, sprinkled ashes over the money, and finally pronounced it safe, convincing the peasants of its safety by taking his own share on the spot. Several days went by, and since the peasants felt no symptoms of disease they grew less and less afraid, so that nearly the whole town would come trooping out to signal to us and offer all sorts of objects and provisions for sale. Meanwhile we lived in the barn, and waited. I slept as soundly upon the straw as I had at home and ate heartily of the food cooked over an open fire. We said prayers, Sam paced up and down behind the barn, father kept busy by dealing with the villagers and making improvements in our quarters. The novelty of the situation made it attractive to me and after the strain of Kashoffka every one felt safer and more content in our queer refuge.

I think we lived in the barn a few weeks, perhaps longer. At first we received no news, but one day a peasant, who was jealous of those who were selling us provisions, shouted to us that the plague in Kashoffka was

over and that he had seen one of our neighbors on the road the day before. Father was slow to believe this, especially since it was contradicted by the others, but from that time on rumors reached us that no new cases of cholera had appeared for several days and that the people who had escaped death were beginning to go back to their old pursuits. Father, whose plans had been seething inside his brain during his enforced inactivity, was impatient to get back. Mother was more cautious. She was thankful that her prayers had been answered and that she had not been obliged twice in her lifetime to see two thirds of her family wiped out. Finally, when there was no doubt the epidemic had subsided, we left the barn, which I shall always think of with a certain affection, and drove back to our dwelling. Before we moved in, it was fumigated with sulphur, and for days afterward the sharp smell of sulphur made the place seem strange and kept me uneasy continually.

After such a disaster, things return to their normal course so gradually that the full horror of memory is dulled. The events may be reviewed, but the feeling, mercifully, may never be recaptured. I got accustomed to the idea that such and such a man was dead, that the place occupied in the school by so and so was empty, that this or that girl had no mother. Faces marked with sorrow and privation impressed me sharply now and then and I would recall that formerly these people had been gay. On the whole, though, the village recovered surprisingly quickly, a smaller cast in the same old setting.

To me the plague meant a tremendous enlargement of my mental horizon. I grasped the feeling of terror, of things moving out of sight on a larger scale and catching us accidentally in the cogs of their machinery, of the help-

lessness of men and the patience of women; in short, of chance and human dignity.

When the Hebrew school was reopened, I found Welfl, my teacher, thin and much fatigued. He had not had the cholera, for I think nearly every one who got it died. It was considered fatal from the first moment, so that mourning began two or three days before the victim was dead. But Welfl, in order to live, was obliged to follow four other occupations besides that of teacher, and one of these consisted in sitting up all night with the dead when death had occurred too late for burial the same day, and for weeks he had been called upon each night to watch by a body. According to Jewish custom, burial should take place within a few hours after death, and, although eight days of mourning follow, during which all members of the family sit barefooted on the floor, little attention is paid the body from which life has departed. At each religious function, a minyon or quorum consisting of ten adult males must be present, and, when there are not enough relatives qualified to act at a funeral, professional mourners are called upon. By this means Welfl earned a few kopeks and during the epidemic had exposed himself to contagion continually, at the same time undermining his constitution by lack of sleep and scanty food. He escaped, while many stronger men, in spite of elaborate precautions, died. Such incidents strengthened the belief of the pious that the plague struck by the will of God and that purity of mind alone would protect them.

Welfl's second auxiliary occupation was much more to his liking and much more rarely exercised. It was bookbinding. What few books found their way into Koshoffka were well-worn before they got there and were avidly read and handed about by the few men who could read.

When the books began to fall apart or the covers were damaged, they were given to Welfl to repair and he bound them very skillfully and artistically in a most original way. While he was binding a book, Welfl had a very different air from when he was mourning in the corner of some stricken household with other mourners with whom he had sat in so many different places. With a book in his hand, he felt the dignity of his calling, the significance of learning, the light which broke so slowly through ignorance and stupidity. He handled it lovingly, pressing it close to his side when he carried it from place to place, calling little boys to see this or that simple word they had already learned in his classroom as if he were finding crayfish on a pebbled beach. Welfl also carved names and text on gravestones.

The fourth occupation of this versatile teacher brought him into contact with all the housewives. He was skillful at mending broken dishes or pottery. No matter how badly a dish might be broken, Welfl would fit together the pieces, drill holes in the proper places and wire the fragments so that the dish was again serviceable. The wire would rust and the rust would often stain the contents of the plate, but nothing could be wasted, and a journey of two or three days was necessary in order to buy new dishes. The pots and jars were made from clay and baked by the peasants and were beautiful in shape and design. These were easier to replace. Only one or two of the wealthy families had silver dishes or silver plate, and these were used only on special occasions. When our table was set with silverware, the neighbors would find all sorts of excuses to pass the window or look in at the door in order to see the silver.

Most of the possessions of the peasants had come to

them by inheritance. They very seldom bought anything, because they had no money. Their land, according to Russian law, had to be divided equally among the male children, so that the larger the family, the less land was available for each one. Often, the strips became so narrow that a plow could scarcely be turned, and in that case, the peasants were obliged to leave their land and become workmen in the cities. They were very bitter about this, naturally, and when transplanted in that fashion, formed an element which was continuously the cause of discontent and trouble. Only the wealthier peasants had plows, in our sense of the word. Many of them used a simple sharp stone fastened to a stick, which must have been exactly like the first plow devised by man. If the peasant had no sons, the land reverted to the local lord.

The peasant's home consisted of a log cabin, which, usually, had two small rooms with a door in the center, and a corridor in which the pigs lived. The room on the left side was usually used as a storeroom, containing provisions for the winter, and on the right side the whole family lived, ate, and slept together. The huge brick stove was used for baking, and the house was lighted at night by placing blazing pine knots upon the shelf above the oven. Under a platform from the oven, the young pigs were allowed to sleep. There was no furniture, except, perhaps, a home-made bench and table, a spinning-wheel, and in some cases a loom, upon which the women wove clothing in winter. Two or three feet from the floor was a sort of platform, upon which the members of the family slept, and the larger the family, the wider the platform. The poorest houses had no chimneys at all, for, without a chimney, less wood was necessary to keep up the fire. The house was always black from smoke. There

were no windows. Those who were a little better off had chimneys and small windows which could not be opened. On the walls of the room was always a picture of the Tsar, sometimes the Tsar and his family, and around them, framed in beautifully carved wooden frames, were the pictures of saints in colors. In the corner was a little lamp before the ikon, which was fed with oil the peasants produced themselves.

Their food consisted mostly of potatoes or cereals, which they took from the fields. It was served in a huge wooden bowl, and they used wooden spoons and knives which they carved themselves, and usually decorated very beautifully, depicting faces, scenes, and sometimes abstract designs. No matter how many there were in the family, each one would lean over and reach into the big bowl in the center of the table. Outside of the house there was usually a beehive, sometimes two or three, and the bees learned to know their master, and often followed him in a swarm for a considerable distance when he went to work, then turned and came back to the house.

The barns were located at a considerable distance from the houses, near the gardens and pasture. There wheat and corn were threshed and the cows and horses kept. In some cases, however, the cattle and horses were kept in the house. I remember one poor man who saved money half his life to get a horse, and when he did so, was obsessed with the idea that the horse might take cold, so he kept the horse with him in the house always.

The locks on the door of the houses and barns were also made by the peasants, and very beautifully carved, with keys which were often two or three feet long and having as many as twenty teeth.

The women worked as hard as the men, side by side

with them, in the fields or in the barns. Pregnant women continued their work as if nothing was the matter, and often had their children in the fields, and in an hour or two were back at work. The next day the mother would carry her newborn infant in a basket attached to her back. All the peasants went barefooted, except in winter, when they wrapped their feet with rags. But these crude sandals were usually decorated with colored twine and woven in diamond shapes. On Sunday, the peasants would go to church barefooted, but as they approached the church, the dome of which was blue and gold, they would stop and put on their sandals. They always considered it a hardship to wear boots, and in the army were often seen marching barefooted, with their boots swung over their shoulders, since they were forbidden by the officers to throw them away. The garments were homespun and made of wool, or mixed wool and cotton, but always embroidered with bright colors. The men wore belts around their blouses, and the women always had colored ribbons in their hair. The weddings and funerals were riots of color, with banners containing the pictures of the saints, beautifully colored and embroidered, and priests in glistening vestments.

Most of the plowing was done with oxen, for only the wealthy peasants had horses. Often, when they could afford neither a horse nor a cow, the peasant family, men, women, and children, would drag the plow themselves.

To the peasants, Kashoffka was the world. Many old men and women had never been beyond its limits. They grew their own tobacco, chopped it, and smoked it in huge pipes. They obtained fire by placing a certain dry pulp between two stones, and hitting one stone against the other. The soil in the village and around it was

sandy; after a rain it was like a sea of mud. The pigs, chickens, song birds, storks, children, snakes, and crickets, all seemed to be mingled inextricably together, like strands woven into a carpet. Sometimes the pigs tried to take away food from the children, and once, in such a case, a pig grabbed my hand in which I was holding a baked potato I was carrying to the fields for Sam, and I was dragged a considerable distance, but would not let go.

For a long time after his return from America, father seemed strange and aloof to me. The first of his activities in which I was directly involved began soon after the plague had subsided. On Saturday evening, nearly all the men would gather at our house to discuss plans for the next week, and to those who were going to other towns to trade father would lend money without interest to buy cattle, poultry, or other merchandise. I began to look forward to Saturday evenings on which I handled the cool and beautiful gold and silver coins and was allowed to stay up much later than usual. I would sit on a high stool at the table, with the coins in front of me, and while father was discussing the various projects, I would arrange the gold and silver pieces into patterns. The gold coins, or prialen, worth about five roubles, would stand on edge. This was one way in which the money was tested. The Tsar's likeness on the coins increased my awe for him, a feeling which had always been tremendously strong in me.

Robbery, except for the exploits of Charton and some of his gang, who were moved by a spirit of bravado more than a desire for gain, was uncommon in Kashoffka and for the most part the doors and windows were not locked. But, because of the feeling that money made in America was tainted, several attempts were made to defraud us.

Some men quite strict and pious concluded that, since the earning of the money had involved Sabbath-breaking and other irregular practices, it was a virtuous act to take it from the man who had sacrificed his soul for material things. Such an act would discourage irreligion, they thought. One night I was awakened by a strange noise and called father. As he got up to investigate, some men ran away from our doorway. As soon as he could strike a light, father found that the chest which contained our valuables had been taken outside. Apparently the thieves had entered the house without waking us, but had not had time to load the chest on their cart.

During the week the money was kept in a commode, and not long after the attempt at burglary a number of gold coins were taken and for some time no trace of them could be found. We were still in the house of David the miller, and I suspected he had taken the money, since he was the only one who knew where it was kept. I noticed also that just at the time the money disappeared, David, who formerly had stopped to say good evening to us when he returned from work each evening, avoided coming into our part of the house and no longer greeted us. Because I was cashier on Saturday night I felt responsible for the gold and could think of nothing else but recovering it. It never seemed irrevocably lost.

David talked in his sleep every night and began acting strangely in the daytime, so I decided to hide where I could hear him and stayed awake until after midnight, when he began to turn and to mumble. I imagined I heard him say, 'They'll never find it,' but the words became indistinct and I was obliged to go back to bed without a clue. The next night, however, I heard him mention the loft two or three times, and after he had gone to

the mill the next morning, I climbed the ladder to the loft and hidden in the hay I found a crock containing the coins. Not one was missing.

Feivish, who told us secretly of the marvelous things in the houses of the priest and the dyak, bought through the agency of his Russian friends a small wagon with iron rims to the wheels and iron axles. Most of the wagons were all of wood and creaked outlandishly when dampness caused the hubs to swell. Nearly all the wagons in the district were made of wood, and Feivish was particularly proud of his new possession. The wagon was small, and so Feivish bought a small horse, but this little horse the peasants soon said had the Devil in him. He could outrun and out-pull any horse in town and had so much spirit that he never would permit another animal to pass him. One day, Feivish hitched up his little horse to the iron wagon and started for a near-by town to make some purchases. He was gone three or four days, and planned to get back in time for the Sabbath. But it rained and the roads became muddy, which made the load just too heavy for the little horse to pull. After much struggling, they got as near as the Grabley, but the Sabbath begins promptly at sundown, and before Feivish could reach the village, the sun set, so he was obliged to jump out, unhitch the horse, turn him loose in the Grabley, leave his wagon standing there with its load, and walk into the town, for walking was permitted by the religious laws on the Sabbath, while riding was forbidden. The result was that Charton the podrizer, who had no religious scruples about stealing on Saturday or any other day, made away with the wagon and its load, and we were only able to recover it by consulting Yashka the fisherman, who, as I have already explained, was the go-between in all such

cases. After the usual preliminaries, in which Yashka said he had no idea where it was or who had taken it, the fisherman advised us to look in the river, about a half-mile below our house. There was a deep pool some distance from the bank and the thieves had hidden the wagon in the water. In order to get it out, Feivish, father, and some other men had to row down the river in crude boats, which were made by hollowing out the trunks of large trees, and raise the wagon by means of ropes. For this information Yashka was paid a small sum, which he took with his habitual protestations.

The river always intrigued me and I think this incident concentrated my attention upon it. Although I was nearly six years old, I could not understand why the men were not able to walk on the bottom of the river and to haul out the wagon in that direct fashion rather than the clumsy means they adopted. Soon afterward, while bathing in the river, I managed to get out of sight of the older people and walked out as far as I could, when the current took me beyond my depth and I was nearly drowned. I could not account for my buoyancy.

It was about this time, when I was six years old, that I was given my first insight into those terrible family dramas which leave their mark forever upon the participants and linger in the minds of those who witness them. I was beginning to understand many things, the beauties of nature, the joys of study, the exhilaration of fighting, the intricacies of trade. In Kashoffka, as in other Jewish communities of that period, the family was a firm unit, each member bound to the others by tradition, custom, and the usual divisions of labor as well as by natural affection. This was true also of the Russian peasants. Rich or poor, the husband and wife had certain specific duties

and authority. The man was accepted as the head of the household and the woman as his subordinate. There was no dispute on that point. Boys went to school. Girls learned housework. Indoors or out, men and women worked side by side. It is with considerable surprise that immigrants to America from Russia and Poland learn that here for a woman to work out-of-doors is considered improper. Divorce in Kashoffka was practically unknown, until the occasion of which I am about to write and which struck so close to me as to leave an indelible impression.

My mother had two sisters. One is now in America, and is the wife of one of the men who made the journey with me. She is not at all like my mother, although she was very kind to me in my last days in the village. The other, Rivka, now lives in Kovla and has many of the characteristics my mother had. Needless to say she also has my strongest affection. Aunt Rivka was married to a man called Chaskil the butcher, who lived in Chitrisk, not far from our village. This town also was completely wiped from the face of the earth by the war. My aunt and uncle loved each other so dearly that their attachment was considered an example to the neighborhood. They were happy in each other's society, shared their common burdens, but were afflicted with one of the greatest misfortunes which could befall a Jewish couple. They had no children.

It was not only that Jewish parents at that time missed the love of children, if there were none, but they also longed to have some one say the prayers for them for a year after their death. The Hebrew law provides that if a husband and wife have no children for a period of ten years, they may be divorced without further grounds and

without alimony. Aunt Rivka and Uncle Chaskil, as fond as they were of one another, thought it was their duty to separate and very sadly decided to do so. The divorce was pronounced in Kashoffka.

On the appointed day, men, women, and children lingered fearfully in the streets, trying to peep through the windows for a glimpse of this awful ceremony. As a favorite nephew, I was admitted to the room. My aunt and uncle and all the witnesses were in tears. Sobs shook the walls and the gloom was so deep that for days I could not shake it off at all. The rabbi in his ceremonial robes uttered the necessary phrases and the pair, who had lived in exemplary harmony for a decade, said farewell forever. Even the rabbi could not hold back his tears. The occasion was more awful than a funeral, since it was far more uncommon and signified a parting more irrevocable.

After the divorce was granted, Aunt Rivka married a widower from a town called Stubbervy. There was no question of his virility, since he had begotten twelve children by a former wife. He was respected in the community and in every way a good man, but he died many years later, leaving her childless, and with his own children to care for. Aunt Rivka is alive to-day, but she is very old and her greatest sorrow is that she must go barren to her grave. It is somewhat ironic that her first husband, Chaskil, after the divorce married a woman who had had at least six children, but after her marriage to Chaskil she had no more. The sacrifice of my aunt and uncle's happiness for the sake of possible unborn children was in vain, but it was understood and approved by their neighbors. Such was the importance of offspring.

Always the river had a great fascination for me: it was

so closely bound up in the life of the village. The wheels of the two water mills were driven constantly round and round by the current, reflections of clouds held their own against the stream while the quiet surface of the water slipped silently away. Animals were driven in herds to the banks to drink and made great black wallows in the mud, pocked with hoof marks. Fishing was one of the most popular amusements and occupations and fish were plentiful and of many varieties. The largest were a yard long, the smallest resembled perch. My brother Sam enjoyed fishing more than anything else, and still does. Just the other day, when the stock market took its surprising tumble and not only was the whole country in suspense, but Sam's life savings were in the process of being swept away, Sam, hungry for the peace of Kashoffka, took a friend from the Volhynia district to the banks of the Brookline Reservoir, where they fished and talked about the old country.

There were several ways of catching fish in Kashoffka. In winter it was done by chopping holes in the ice and setting a lantern to attract the fish by its light. Some of the most ingenious men had rigged up automatic signals which held up a little flag when a fish tugged at the hook, and in that way one man could tend several lines and could keep warm by trotting from one to another and slapping himself with his mittens. Another method, used only when the river was open, was to cover small pieces of bread with pepper and throw them into the pools and backwater behind the Grabley. The fish would fight for the morsels of bread, and having swallowed them would turn up their bellies and float helplessly on the surface. The pepper had some strange effect on them which paralyzed them for several minutes. If they were not raked in,

they would recover, turn over and swim away, but I believe they died soon afterward. If the supply had not been so much larger than the demand, this practice would have depleted it.

The hook-and-line method was the favorite, there as elsewhere, and for leaders white horsehair was believed to be the best. Whether it was because the fish could not see the white hair in the water or whether it brought luck I am not sure, but the owners of white horses invariably found the tails of their beasts thinning out and finally becoming quite hairless. It was not an uncommon sight to see a white horse slapping ineffectually at the flies with a tail plucked as clean as that of a rat.

Yashka and the other professional fishermen sold their fish to the rabbis, the priest, and officials, and the wealthy families whose men were too busy or considered it beneath their dignity to sit on the Grabley with a pole in their hands. There must have been a species of fish similar to American salmon, for in the evening they would leap from the water and I have often seen them climb the sheet of water which fell from the mill dams.

It was by means of a fish that father won his first lawsuit from Ilchichky. He introduced the practice of appealing to the distant courts of law in cases of dispute, I believe, because he had developed a fondness for legal procedure in America. He was a natural lawyer, and without the least technical training grasped abstract and complicated principles of law, although he spoke broken Russian and had difficulty in expressing himself. He overlooked no chance to play upon the weaknesses or peculiarities of the judges and the witnesses. I think he induced his neighbors to go to court as he might have taught them a game, in order that he might have opponents to play with.

As I have said, the fear and distrust of officials had been so great that they were looked upon as a common enemy and almost nothing would drive any ordinary man to appeal to them. Disputes were settled by arguments and fighting. Among the Jews, the fights most often took place on Saturday afternoons, after the heavy meal and the hour of sleep, when men gathered in the synagogue or the various houses. It was usually understood days in advance that a dispute was to be settled and both sides would have their forces in readiness for the free-for-all which was sure to break out. There were cautious men who tried to keep out of trouble, but there were several others who seemed to enjoy fighting and could not keep out of any quarrel which was started. Foremost among these were two brothers whose children are now in Boston. The older one was killed in a manner I shall tell about later on. Sam was much like the brothers in one respect. If he saw a fight going on, some nervous force drove him to pitch into it. He could not resist, although he seldom had any interest in the cause. Although he is fifty years old now, he has to make a great effort to control himself if he sees a row.

Father's struggle in holding on to his money kept him involved in so many brawls that he had to resort to both the legal and the popular form of settlement continually. He summoned Ilchichky, with whom he had a business disagreement, to court in a distant town which would correspond to a county seat here. After the trial was over and he was well on his way home, Ilchichky discovered he had taken the judge's fur cap by mistake. His own happened to be almost exactly like that of the judge. He stopped his wagon and hurried back, afraid that his case would be greatly prejudiced by his blunder. Father grew

equally uneasy. It occurred to him that his opponent's appearance with the judge's hat while the judge was deliberating upon the case would establish a friendly relationship and would impel the judge to give the opponent the benefit of all the doubt. Just the fact that the two men had selected the same kind of caps established a certain affinity between them. You will see that father, without knowing it, was a good psychologist.

Before his opponent had disappeared around the first bend in the road, father whipped up his horses and hurried into Kashoffka. He had heard that the judge was fond of a particular kind of fish, so he sent for all the peasants who were known to be expert fishermen and started them all out, offering a prize for the biggest and best fish of the kind the judge preferred. Old Stepan, a huge peasant who understood Yiddish and worked for us now and then on Saturday, was successful. He came back within a few hours with a fish which measured nearly from the ground to his waist, and father sent it by fast horses to the judge with his compliments. The fish overbalanced the hat in the scales of justice, and father won, but the other man always believed it was his mistake about the caps which had changed his luck for the worse and lost him the decision.

The next legal entanglement was much more important and for a while looked extremely bad for us. Not long after the plague was over, father made known his plans to build a large house by the river and to annex sheds equipped with devices for handling wool, linseed, cereals, straw, and the other products of the country. Besides the family who entertained the Rotnik, the only one which could compare with ours in the matter of resources was headed by a man called Idey Leib Fishbein, who

had a plant for chopping straw. Naturally, Idey Leib was against us. Father's prestige had aroused a certain amount of antagonism and envy, so his rivals were able to gather quite a number of our enemies around them and to stir up fear and opposition to father's scheme. Since Ilchichky was able to write, he drew up a very skillful petition purporting to come from a large group of townspeople and asking the county officials to withhold authority for father's building on the ground that there was no need for the project he planned, and that, years before, a similar attempt, which had failed, was followed by a serious plague. It was a clever use of certain facts and certain assumptions, and when father applied for his permit, it was denied him. That threw our whole household into gloom.

Father, finding that the Rotnik and the Pristiff had been bribed, got the idea of appealing to the Governor of the district and hitched up the horses at once to start on the five-day journey to the city in which the Governor lived. When he arrived at the Governor's residence, he found a line of people a hundred yards long waiting at the gate. Some were peasant women, with babies slung over their backs; others were crippled or diseased, with rags wound around their heads or their limbs; here and there were fairly well-dressed men, disdainful of their neighbors, and trying continually to attract the attention of the guard who stood at the gate with a huge saber in his hand or of the soldiers who paced up and down inside the grounds, with bayonets set. Now and then a carriage would enter the driveway and officials or carefully gowned women would pass through the doorway which was framed by ornamental pillars. Father arrived in mid-afternoon and waited until dark, when the officer in

charge sent them all away. That evening father tried to find some one who had influence, but none of the men he asked to help him, or offered money if they could get him an audience, were willing to try. So the next day, after standing in the lengthening line several hours, he saw the clerk descend the driveway and walk rapidly down the line, stopping a moment by the side of the most respectable-looking of the petitioners to ask them curtly what they wanted. Dozens were sent away without even that attention. Father impressed the clerk sufficiently to obtain an interview, but was obliged to wait another day or two before he finally got into the Governor's presence. Once there his persuasive manner and the justice of his case won over the Governor, who glanced perfunctorily at the papers and gave orders at once for the decision of the county officials to be reversed.

When the Governor agreed to give father his building permit, father asked that it be sent to him in the hands of the officials who had been bribed, and who had denied him the right to build. In this, as in other things, his dramatic inspiration was evident, and it was an impressive scene in Kashoffka when the Rotnik was obliged to come to the house where we were staying, dressed in his uniform and shining boots, and hand over what he had refused to give before the Governor had been consulted. When father started hiring men to do the building he swore them to secrecy. At daylight one morning, his gangs of workmen met him on the river-bank at a point almost opposite the middle water mill, where the ford used during the late summer months touched our side of the river, and began digging the foundation. Peasants on their way to the fields stopped a moment to see what was going on, and men and women, putting on their caps and shawls in

haste, scurried from house to house to ask what Nathan the Wise was going to do. The men who had been induced to sign the petition by father's rival began to be afraid they had made trouble for themselves and waited to see what their leader would do. The building went on for a few days, loads of timber, sacks of lime, and kegs of nails began to come in, and soon the heavy joists and uprights were set in place and the skeleton of the building began to raise itself between the village and the river. Father's plans, as always, were elaborate, based upon things he had seen in America, in the larger Russian cities, even at the Governor's house. He intended not only to have a dwelling, but flower gardens, shrubs, fruit trees, and exotic birds and fowls. His enthusiasm did not lead him to confide his plans to any one outside the family, however, and he enjoyed the effect upon his neighbors produced by each new unheard-of feature he introduced. The roof was not to be of straw nor of boards, but of a kind of stucco which had never been seen in Kashoffka. All the time I was not at school I spent watching the builders, asking them questions, reading labels, solving problems in arithmetic for them, and escorting a favored few of my schoolmates around the place where our house was to be.

It looked for a while as if our enemies had given up, for father's rivals were as close-mouthed as father himself and gave no indication that they noticed what was going on. One morning, as we got up at the second rooster crow to hurry down to get the workmen started, in looking out of the window toward the place where the tops of our timbers should be seen, there was nothing but the tree-tops of the distant horizon. Father hurried to the river-bank, half dressed, found his watchman gagged and tied to a

tree, the timbers torn down, and the materials scattered or thrown into the river. From that moment on, it was like war. Father hired the strongest peasants he could find to guard the place, armed them with clubs, and all night they kept watch, with a wood fire burning brightly to prevent a surprise attack, and many times each night father would wake up and look out of the window to see if everything was all right. Fights were frequent, stones were thrown at the watchmen from the darkness, guards were ambushed and beaten up on their way to and from the building site, but the leaders did nothing which could be traced directly to them. The air was charged with excitement which I enjoyed as much as my father did. When the house was more than half finished, an attempt was made to burn it, and, although this attempt failed, the danger of fire was greater than any other.

The structure was a queer combination of the useful and the beautiful, being at the same time the most complicated industrial plant in the district and, except for that of the nobleman across the river, the most pretentious residence. The news of it spread, as all news did, by means of travelers, and many strangers drifted in looking for work, some of them very skillful. Among them was an old German who was a wood-carver, and father entrusted to him the decoration of the doorway, the window frames, the eaves, and the woodwork of the living-room. The old German was very fond of children, particularly of me, and I watched him for weeks to the exclusion of all the other work. I shall never get over the astonishment I felt when he took up an old, knotted stick of wood and by whittling on it with his sharp, horn-handled knife (following the notches he made with movements of his head and of his tongue, half out, as children sometimes imitate the marks

of their pencils), he produced the head of a rooster, crowing. From another quite ordinary stick, which he let me examine before he began, he carved out an old woman bent double with rheumatism. For a long time I examined odd sticks and cut away at them with a pocket-knife, trying to find what was hidden inside, and I did not grasp for months that the man could have made the old woman from the rooster stick or might have carved a pig from the same wood which disclosed the old woman. When I did understand that any limb of a tree had hidden inside the shapes of animals, ghosts, devils, and saints, it seemed still more marvelous.

I had never seen any real machinery, except the dripping wheels of the mills and the spinning-wheels and looms which the peasant women kept clattering through the winter, and so I was especially curious about the wheels and shafts and frames which were being erected in the sheds at the back of our living-rooms. There was one tremendous wooden wheel with cogs carefully cut along the edges and this was set up, not standing on edge as the mill wheels were, but lying flat. It revolved around a stout axle with an upright beam and two horizontal beams a half-circle apart which were rigged with whiffletrees. Later I learned that this wheel was to be turned round and round by means of horses hitched to the horizontal beams and following one another monotonously all day long without one gaining a foot upon the other. Smaller wheels with cogs to fit those of the big one were turned by it in the reverse direction and by means of shafts furnished power to the various machines.

We had left the house of David the miller soon after his unsuccessful theft of the gold coins and had rented a place from one of the tailors named Beryl. We stayed

there about a year, three or four months before the new building was started and during the time it was being built. Because of the controversy and continual fighting our enterprise aroused, Beryl's sense of importance was greatly increased by his having us as tenants. He wore an air of mystery as he sewed, sitting cross-legged, and let all the neighbors think he could say a great deal concerning our plans if he cared to. As in nearly all the affairs of the village, Beryl had a double and opposed set of interests in our project. The more often the building was destroyed or the materials stolen, the longer we should have to remain with him and pay him rent. On the other hand, my father's patronage was important and Beryl's duties as a host could not be overlooked. All this kept Beryl as busy as a hunting dog, listening to everything that was said and coming to father each evening with rumors he had picked up from his customers.

Beryl was really a remarkable person. He was short, stocky, and his face was very red. He could neither read nor write, but could talk a mile a minute. When he got to arguing, the veins on the back of his neck and his forehead would stand out until I was afraid they would burst. His expression was like that of a bulldog. Being a natural-born politician, he could not keep out of public affairs even in a village which had so little civic organization as Kashoffka. For many years the office of Starosta had been filled by a worthy and somewhat 'educated' man named Welfl who was well liked by everybody and whose only drawback to the dignity of office was an ailment of the scalp which kept his head covered with sores. Since the office was an elective one, and because it involved keeping the records of births and deaths and was therefore important to those who wished to evade military

service or otherwise had taken liberties with their passports, Beryl decided to contest Welfl's election. The campaign was the most spirited ever seen in Kashoffka.

The voting took place in the old synagogue and votes were cast by means of beans dropped into a box. Beryl, for days previous and especially on the day of election, harangued his fellow townsmen, among whom I had insinuated myself, and made campaign promises which would even put some American politicians to shame. He promised to have the Rotnik deposed and a better one appointed, to persuade the Governor to permit timber to be cut in the forests and thus to provide all the jobless with employment. The Grabley, which had stood I know not how many decades, he promised to have widened, and he also agreed that, if he were elected, he would arrange to have the river flow continually at a proper level and not be reduced by dams upstream, in which case an unpleasant smell pervaded the village and the water was rendered unpleasant to drink. With regard to the fire department, he pledged himself to increase its equipment by two barrels, which would double the number then available. He assured the voters he would secure an adequate fall of rain during the season when crops were often athirst and crowned his oration with a declaration that, during his régime as Starosta, no illegitimate children should be born. Welfl, modest man that he was, could not promise half as much.

I have never seen a more thrilling political rally. Different-colored beans were used to denote the two candidates, and at last the voters began dropping beans into the box, but when the count was totaled it was found that there were twice as many beans as there were voters in Kashoffka. Beryl had a large majority. Welfl's supporters

protested that there had been trickery and hardly any one could deny that the mathematics of the situation looked queer. Another vote was ordered, but each time the number of beans proved excessive. Finally, the Beryl contingent changed its tactics and, instead of adding to Beryl's beans, some one subtracted from those of Welfl by stealing most of them. Every one was so weary by that time that Beryl was declared elected.

He remained in office one year, the length of a single term, for the people of Kashoffka remembered what he had promised and were dissatisfied when the same old Rotnik appeared, more insolent than ever, the first man who tried to cut wood in the Government forest had half his hide beaten off with sticks, the hungry continued to complain and drink vodka when they could get it, the Grabley retained its former shape, the river went nearly dry until the smell of fish and refuse filled the air for five miles on either side, the lonely pair of fire barrels were not augmented, and rain fell as capriciously as usual, on the just and the unjust. To cap the climax, more illegitimate children put in an appearance. Beryl was returned to his former humble status and Welfl again took the duties of office.

Still Beryl held himself ready to give advice on any subject and somehow kept on good terms with everybody. When the Rotnik came to town, he often went to see Beryl, and, although it is unlikely he had any real business with the tailor, his visits to Beryl caused the latter to assume that attitude of mystery and intrigue which kept everybody guessing and made all the townspeople loath to make an enemy of him. During the first eighteen months of the World War, no signs of hostilities reached Kashoffka, but in nineteen-sixteen the Russian troops

came pouring in hurriedly, to be driven out again in a few days by the Austrians. Beryl, in the midst of such colossal events, must have been busier than ever, and his air of knowing secrets cost him his life, for when the Russians retook the village they suspected Beryl of traffic with the enemy and hanged him to a tree near the old bathhouse, leaving two soldiers on guard for two days in order that his body, swinging in the breeze, might teach his neighbors to seem to know nothing instead of everything.

Tailors and shoemakers, as well as being at the bottom of the social scale, were most often suspected by Government officials of plotting and intrigue. The fact that they sewed all day, with such thoughtful and inscrutable faces, led the Government spies to believe they were thinking, and a man who sat thinking all day was sure to be thinking of something detrimental to the interests of those in power. Indeed, the suspicions of the secret service men were quite well founded in many instances, but surely not in the case of Beryl or of any one else in Kashoffka, where the Government seemed as remote as the Deity and much less comprehensible. To an inhabitant of Kashoffka the Government meant the Rotnik, who came there twice or three times a year, and the special messenger of the Tsar who had appeared only twice in the memory of the oldest men of the village, once to announce that the Tsarina was pregnant and to order all citizens to pray she might have a son, the other time to announce that Russia was at war with China.

The flower gardens and shrubs around our new house were planted and tended by Sidder, a fine old peasant who had worked for our family for years, coming just after daybreak each Saturday to carry wood and water, replenish the fire, and perform all the labors which were

sinful for us on that day. He could make any kind of plant grow and had learned to take care of trees that were ailing. Sidder was assisted by Stepan, the peasant who caught the prize fish for father and who could act as interpreter between the workmen who spoke only Yiddish and the peasants who spoke a local dialect of Russian called Chachlatski, and which was almost unintelligible to a Russian from another district. Along with Morris the bathman, Charton, my father, and one or two others, Stepan measured more than six feet without shoes on. In summer he went barefoot; in winter he wrapped his feet with rags and bark. His height caused much comment because of the fact that his father was one of the smallest men in the district, so short that his beard fell to his waist.

In some public garden in Austria, father had seen peacocks roaming around the park and bright blue macaws chained to their perches. He sent all the way to Warsaw to obtain similar birds, and after months of waiting they arrived in Roshist and were brought to us by a teamster hauling supplies. The whole town came to see them and an old woman whispered 'Chort' (the Devil) when the most resplendent of the macaws cocked a malicious eye in her direction and let out a raucous scream that could be heard across the river. I watched the peacock for days before I saw him spread his tail.

Todor the mason built the enormous brick oven and kept busy at odd jobs around the oil-refining shed. I had never seen him at steady work before, but he was one of the men I remembered from earliest childhood. Todor was the town drunkard. He was honest, handsome, strong, and good-natured, but every few weeks he would come driving into Kashoffka, would leave his team unhitched in front of the Krechma, and start to drink. Everybody knew what that meant. The women would think of little chores and errands they wanted done and would look forward to a day or two without their children running around their legs. The first two or three days Todor was happy and amiable. He would go from house to house, asking what he could do, and would take care of a whole troop of children. His horses would be carefully fed and, when there was no one else to talk to, Todor would hold long conversations with them, appealing to first one and then the other to verify his remarks. When he could no longer walk straight, he would sit at the long table in the Krechma, with his back to the long rows of fragrant kegs and barrels, roaring and waving his arms in imaginary discussions or laughing and speaking endearing words to whoever was there. At last he would stagger out of the door and lie down in some one's garden or in the sand, and, when he would be awakened by children pouring sand or water into his mouth or ears, he would go back and drink himself quickly into stupefaction again. His spells of drunkenness sometimes lasted a week or ten days. As the memory has returned to me of Todor, dragging himself homeward half-blind from the pain in his head, retched with nausea and weak from fatigue and exposure, I have realized what his despair and dumb resignation to the force which drove him here and there must have cost him — the most horrible hours of which man is capable. Sometimes, after a day of sleep at home he would beg his wife to beat him, which she was not unwilling to do, and he would rush to the church to prostrate himself before the ikon and beat his forehead on the stones.

Father had chosen a building site near the river, at

some distance from the center of town, in order to minimize one of the principal causes for complaint. The smell of the flax during certain stages of its manufacture was vile and the fumes from the linseed oil refiner were no less disagreeable and in another key, one might say, so that an outrageous olfactory discord was produced when the two odors were mingled. These, mixed with the smell of sweet peas and phlox, of ordure and manure in the back yard, of pine woods and the aroma of matchless Jewish cooking, gave our establishment as odd an appeal to the nose, sometimes, as its mixed architecture afforded the eye. Smells, when they are incongruously assorted, vibrate like chords of music, modulating and resolving themselves as the breeze shifts or new elements are introduced or withdrawn. Some combinations always seemed to have a humorous aspect and made me laugh whenever they crossed my nostrils; others brought a feeling of sadness and made it difficult to breathe. The gamut of odors, I believe, is a circle, the very sweetest and the most hideous blending in a common zone. It is possible that smells are complementary, like colors; that some enhance the value of others, as red brings out the green in a picture, and that certain stenches which would be most disagreeable alone are harmonious when combined with others. Certainly they have variations in intensity which correspond to the tints and shades of color and to the loudness or softness of sound. At any rate, Kashoffka, which afforded me such a range and variety of colors and music, was no less prodigal in training and developing my sense of smell. As the village, in retrospect, seems to have more radiant scenes and more stirring sounds than the more civilized communities through which I have passed, its smells I remember as being much better and

much worse than any others. My first whiff of incense, which I inhaled behind a hedge as a resplendent choir boy swung his censer within a few feet of my face as the procession passed which I was forbidden to witness, is sharper in my memory than any I have smelled in later years. The excitement and fear of discovery no doubt enhanced it, as nervousness will magnify sounds.

I was glad that our new house was near the river, the moving surface of which, marked with currents and eddies like the finest grain of polished wood, slid day by day beneath our windows. It was a welcome change from the circle of houses around the sand at some point of the circumference of which I had lived since I was born. There were bustle and excitement from morning until night, shouts of workmen, pounding of hammers, grinding and creaking of the crude mechanism which was being put together like a picture puzzle each day. Evenings, and particularly on Saturday, the men would come to interview father about the next week's trade. Mondays and Thursdays, the days mother always set aside to cook for the poor and the sick, I would spend the afternoon in carrying baskets and parcels from one door to another. Her charitable efforts were doubled because of our apparent prosperity.

When we moved into the new building, we had a tremendous house-warming to which all the poor were invited as well as the rich. On such occasions, disputes were forgotten, and the men who had tried to prevent father from erecting the building were as strenuous and gay in celebrating its completion as those who had taken our side of the controversy. The musicians from Kolk, who invariably seemed to be our choice, tuned up in the yard, Morris the incomparable fiddler standing on an im-

provised table made of sawhorses and planks, his comrades sitting on kegs, except for the busy bass fiddler who had to step around his huge instrument as if he were dodging behind a tree while the notes his bow dragged forth kept everybody's feet twitching in time. On that occasion, I led the dance with a little girl for a partner. She was the granddaughter of an old 'soldier of Nicholas' who worked for the rival family and was the prettiest child in the whole district. Her story is an odd one in that it was foreseen and discussed throughout the town for years before it happened. I used to hear the old women shake their heads and whisper sorrowfully whenever this little girl would appear, and I believe she felt the sadness her beauty inspired, for her face was always wistful, even in her happiest moments. Long before I understood at all what the neighbors were foretelling, I had absorbed the general idea that this beautiful little creature was coming to a bad end. As she grew up, every sign of approaching maturity caused the neighbors to sigh.

'It won't be long now,' they would say and wag their heads. Some of them had hoped in the beginning that she would lose her good looks as she grew up, as so many extremely pretty children do, but instead she became more beautiful and more pensive.

Gradually I began to comprehend the disaster which the whole village was mourning in advance. In the family where her grandfather worked were two sons, both of whom were allowed to do about as they pleased. The older was deaf and unpromising, the younger precocious and willful. When the little girl reached the age of thirteen, the expected happened. As the old women had prophesied almost from her birth, she was seduced by the younger son and was sent away to some city, just after her

grandfather had died, to have her baby and work as a chambermaid. I shall think of her as she was when she took my hand for the first dance at our house-warming and stepped across the floor so daintily. As I get older, I shall convince myself that the rest of it was a dream, that I have confused the whisperings of gossiping old women with facts and that the old soldier's grandchild did not grow up at all. That will be much better, will it not? Stop tuning, Morris, and strike the first chord!

The beggars danced in the yard, stuffing cakes into the pockets of their blouses to leave their arms free. Upon the earth beat the sound of their bare feet in a rhythm which grew faster and faster. They crowded and shouted with cracked voices as the other guests crowded around to watch them. An old woman, bent with rheumatism, placed one hand behind her to support her back and hobbled into the circle. She was greeted with cheers. Morris, on top of the table, shouted the name of the piece and the beat of the music shifted, grew more stately. An old man with a peg leg was pushed forward, his mouth full of crumbs, and all hands began clapping in time to the stately tune. The old man had one bare foot and an old boot some one had given him slung by its lacing over his shoulder.

'Come on! Begin!' some one yells.

'Begin! Begin!' the whole crowd shouts, clapping their hands together and swaying from side to side.

The old man and the old woman face each other and bow, and because she is so bent to start with it seems as if she were touching the ground. As they move around a half-circle, she takes out a colored handkerchief and holds it at arm's length. They bow again, join hands, turn back to back, and face about, each movement coinciding

with the blunt square corners of the music. After the stately measures, the mood of the music changes. It picks up the movements of galloping horses, horses ridden swiftly in the distance. The knuckles and elbows and knees of the old couple twitch, they hobble more swiftly, the old man gains, the old woman edges away, the men and women shout and cheer as the fiddler plays faster. As the old man stops, out of breath, a young man leaps in from the steps of the house and dances a Caucasian dance with a hoop. The old woman has a coughing fit, then stuffs her cake into her mouth and wipes the tears from her eyes. The sun kindles the whole flat surface of the water and the clouds take on their sunset colors. There is a circle of faces around the dancer, a ring of houses around the sand, farms beyond the houses, and the great wooded horizon enveloping them all.

Our Saturday evening dealings became more extensive and I was definitely established as cashier. On weekdays peasants began to bring loads of seed to be pressed or straw to be chopped. This resulted in a rivalry between me and Idey Leib Fishbein's son which outdistanced that which had existed between our fathers. When I was about eight or nine years old and was entering actively into our business activities, Fishbein's son must have been in his early twenties. We would both watch the Grabley and when an ox cart or a wagon laden with straw appeared, we both made a dash for it. The straw was hauled in bundles or sheaves just as it was taken from the fields after the grain had been harvested. Young Fishbein and I would argue with the driver, each of us trying to entice him to come to our respective places to have the straw chopped. While Fishbein made the practice of taking the road past the priest's house and thence across the

Grabley, I would often take a short cut, which meant crossing the river at the narrow part near our house. In summer I would swim across the river, with what few clothes I had tied upon my back, and would dress quickly on the other bank without stopping to dry myself. In winter I would cross the ice and sometimes when it was not frozen solidly would jump from cake to cake. By the time Fishbein arrived, I had usually sold the peasant my idea. I know that my red head, which the peasants took for a sign of good luck, influenced them strongly in my favor. Also the fact that our machinery was so complicated and unique in that part of the country aroused their curiosity and brought them to us.

On the occasions when I was successful in getting the peasant's promise before Fishbein came upon the scene, I would step up on the wagon, take the reins, and snap the whip, which would send the horse galloping past my rival, who would stand with a look of amazement, wondering how I got ahead of him. The townspeople began to notice our performances and we soon became a topic of conversation. Because I was so much smaller than Fishbein, everybody laughed at him and made fun of him. Whoever had a quarrel with him or with his father would threaten to get me to argue the case. Things reached the point where just the sight of me made our rival's son frantic with rage. I became bolder with each success and sometimes would walk into his place, which was near my school, in order to taunt him. In one instance I was called in to confuse him when there was a question as to the hand of a girl. He, of course, made many attempts to beat me up, but usually I was faster than he was. Once, however, he caught me and gave me a frightful thrashing. All the resentment he had been piling up went into that job.

Father made a complaint to the district judge, a procedure which before that was unheard of. Men and boys were beaten every day in the week. It was a part of the village life, the accepted way of settling disputes or taking revenge. The elders got together and decided that so many appeals to the officials would bring disaster upon Kashoffka. It was safer, they thought, to remain obscure and unnoticed, hoping the officials would pass by the village and forget it. Father agreed to drop the complaint on the promise, which was made in the presence of the elders, that young Fishbein would never lay hands on me again. After that I felt safer than ever in taking business from under his nose. I was disappointed, nevertheless, that the case did not reach the court, for I should have been a witness and my desire to see the distant town and the officials was very strong.

After two or three attempts had been made to set the house on fire, father, with his usual ingenuity, thought of a plan which not only took away any inducement to set fire to the house, but made our enemies actually our agents. In that part of Russia, when a house or building is insured, a large placard is furnished by the insurance company, which is nailed on the front wall. Because in Kashoffka there were no arrangements whatever for fighting fire, except for two barrels in a shed near the center of the town, no insurance companies would take the risk, and, in fact, the nearest insurance company was several days' journey away. Father, however, obtained a placard from some distant city, and nailed it to our house, and all of our neighbors said to themselves, 'Nathan the Wise has done what we could not do.' Of course, after that, our enemies thought if the house was burned down, he would get a large sum of money from the insurance company, and in two cases, when a fire started in our premises, our bitterest enemies pitched in and helped us to put it out, believing they were keeping the rich from getting richer.

It was on a Saturday evening that I was stricken by the Evil Eye. Not a few of the villagers, especially those whose eyes were of unusual color or size or had one eye pointing in the wrong direction, were thought to be possessed of the Evil Eye, and any one who looked straight at them would be afflicted with a mysterious malady which, if not properly recognized and treated, would cause them to waste away. The first symptom was yawning, and when any one was taken with uncontrollable fits of yawning, particularly if one of those known to have an Evil Eye had recently been in the room, it was necessary to find a first-born son to break the spell. Any first-born son had the power to counteract the Evil Eye by repeating a special prayer until he himself began to yawn. When he commenced yawning, the afflicted one would stop and would consider himself cured. If nothing was done, yawning would be followed by nausea and that by the wasting sickness. There were other cures and precautions. When one possessed of the Evil Eye left a house or a room, all those present would spit three times after him as he departed.

On the evening I was affected, our house was crowded with men who were trading or preparing to depart for distant villages to spend the week buying livestock or provisions. As usual, I was seated behind the table, counting the gold and silver coins on which was stamped the face of the Tsar, arranging them in piles and patterns and, at father's orders, giving each of the traders the proper amount and keeping an account of each transac-

tion. Among the crowd and scarcely noticed was a tall, lean man named Wova, who was known all over the countryside as one who had the Evil Eye. As soon as Wova had gone out, I began to yawn, which was unusual for me on such occasions as the excitement and the importance of my duties kept me wide awake and alert. This time I could not stop yawning, however, and some one noticed it and remembered that Wova had been in the room and had slipped away without the others having taken the precaution to spit after him. Every one was alarmed, and the general consternation caused me to feel sick at my stomach.

'Run after him,' I was told. 'Make him take it back.'

Wova had quite a start, but I set out through the darkness, running in the direction of his house and stumbling over stones and refuse. Finally I was able to make out the form of a man walking ahead of me and I saw that it was Wova.

'Stop, Reb Wova. You gave me the Evil Eye!' I shouted as I caught up with him, and he made the reply I suppose he had been obliged to make many dozens of times.

'I didn't do it,' he said, and spat three times. I was cured.

Wova died in a Massachusetts hospital of cancer, a disease unknown in Kashoffka. All his children have been successful in business and the one with whom I used to play was decorated four times for his services to America in the World War.

Many of the unfortunate men and women who got the reputation for having an Evil Eye were deeply affected by the fear and suspicion their appearance invariably aroused. After a while the more sensitive of them began

to feel that they were cut off from other people and to hate their fellows. Others felt shame and guilt when any misfortune occurred, knowing it was likely to be attributed to them. Mothers with young children were always afraid to have such a person approach a child. The Poles had a charm which they had learned from the Turks and fastened a blue bead on the clothing or the cradle of an infant. As long as the blue bead, which seemed so much like a constantly staring eye, was there, a baby was thought to be protected. Poles and Gypsies often carried a supply of blue beads which they sold to mothers for this purpose.

The Devil, although seldom seen, was one of the liveliest inhabitants of Kashoffka. Often a noise of horses stamping and kicking would be heard in one of the stables at night and it would be found that one of the horses, although safely fastened in his stall, would be white with sweat and breathing heavily. How could it be explained, unless the Devil had been using him on one of his wild night rides. From that time on, that horse would be carefully watched and feared, and, if he chanced to kick or bite any one afterward or to prick up his ears when no sound was heard or stare into the dark corners as if he saw something mortals could not see, the proof that he was possessed would be complete. Peasants driving through the woods with a load of grain would sometimes lose a sack, and if they went back over the road and did not find it, they would be sure the Devil had stolen it. Any animal was likely to be taken for the Devil in disguise, but goats were believed to be Satan's favorite, and when a goat stared unexpectedly from a clump of woods or bushes, men would stop their work and begin to cross themselves.

The village healer — the znacher he was called — was another of the old 'soldiers of Nicholas' who, when he was not doctoring the sick, sold fishhooks. He had acquired a reputation for having a Good Eye, which carried with it as many beneficial effects as an Evil Eye did misfortunes. This he used when his patient was suffering from an ailment of which the symptoms might be imaginary. He would spit and perform little rites to change the sufferer's luck and by virtue of his sharp eyes and venerable countenance would send his patients away full of confidence that things were going better in the future. He was given credit for many remarkable cures.

For diseases or injuries which were apparent, the old znacher used magic potions and salves which he brewed in secret and sold or applied with elaborate directions and ceremony. The principal ingredient for most of his medicines intended to heal wounds was the powder of rotted wood. Nearly all of the houses in Kashoffka were old and the timbers were rotted inside. By boring through the outer crust with an awl or the point of a jackknife, one could secure a handful of this powder, which was generally used to stop the flow of blood in cases of wounds or circumcisions. Strange to say, blood poisoning was very infrequent. In order that his powder should not resemble too much the ordinary wood pulp which any one might obtain, the znacher mixed it with soot and certain kinds of clay. To make paste he would spit upon it and stir it to the proper consistency. I was sent to him with a minor ailment, and because he thought I was too young to notice what he was doing, he did not take the usual precaution of mixing his salve in secret. I told my parents what he had put into it, mostly powdered crockery obtained from bits of broken dishes he had collected, and

when the story got around the town, many people lost their faith in the healer, since the element of mystery was absent.

It would seem that there was an unusually large number of the old 'soldiers of Nicholas' in our town, but I believe that was likely to be the case wherever one or two had settled. They liked to be together and to tell and retell, day after day, what had befallen them in a quarter of a century of service in the Tsar's army. One of them who had the largest number of stories to tell had been an official recruiting agent or kidnaper and would relate any number of narrow escapes he had had in stealing children from their parents. The others, several of whom had been kidnaped, seemed to bear no resentment. To be a kidnaper, in the old days, was much sought after, since on detached duty they had much more freedom than in the regular army and their pay was augmented by the rewards they received for the boys they brought in.

The system by which Jews had been forced to serve a quarter of a century in the Russian army was instituted by Tsar Nicholas I in 1836 and remained in full force throughout his reign and until the first step to ameliorate it was taken by Alexander II in 1856. Nicholas I conceived the idea in order to make the Jews into Christians by separating them from their families and their co-religionists. The Russian army discipline at that time was the most severe the world has known. At first the law provided for recruits between the ages of twelve and twenty-five, but such strenuous steps were taken to evade conscription that no community could furnish its quota for the army and recruiting agents were hired to kidnap boys eight or nine years old to make up the deficit. The scenes I witnessed in the synagogue where young men to

be called for four years were mutilating themselves and starving themselves into sickness were nothing compared to those I heard of from the old 'soldiers of Nicholas' who, with their comrades, had been faced with a twenty-five-year term under conditions so severe that few Jews could observe their religious practices and remain alive. The trials and privations of the 'soldiers of Nicholas' were terrible but, as in all armies, the spirit of adventure kept the hardiest alive and full of mischief. Having been separated so long from their place of birth, for they were almost always sent to serve in some distant corner of Russia where they would lose touch with their families, these old soldiers found homes wherever they could. In Kashoffka they had a happy time.

It was in Volhynia that the most picturesque protest against the Russian conscription law was made, and the rumors of it reached the ears of Nicholas and caused him to fear a general insurrection. In one of the oldest Volhynia towns, at the time of the infamous ukase, the Chassidim made up nearly the entire Jewish community, and when the news reached them that all their young men were to be sent to Siberia and the distant provinces, never to be seen again, they rushed to the synagogue, wailing, lamenting, and searching their minds for a reason for what they considered a punishment from God. The religious fervor which ensued, the exaggerated and picturesque rites accompanying their grief, were talked about for miles around and reached the ears of the Tsar's agents, who feared a general insurrection. What really happened was that the Chassid leader drew up upon parchment, in the most elegant Hebrew, a statement of the case of his congregation and of Russian Jews generally against Tsar Nicholas and amid profound ceremonies

and prayers placed the petition in the hands of one of their number who had just died, calling upon the soul of the departed to deliver the complaint direct to Almighty God and let Him judge between them and their persecutors. No insurrection followed, and for decades, no relief.

The recruiting agents, or kidnapers, were placed in almost as difficult a position as their prospective victims, in the old days of the twenty-five-year service. Of course, the Jews took the most ingenious and extraordinary measures to escape, recording their children as dead, dressing boys as girls, sending young men into the forests or to distant cities. The recruiting agent, if he failed to fill his quota, was dealt with severely and so, after hunting through a village for the boy he was entitled under the law to get, he would often decide that another would do just as well and would sometimes break by force into a house and tear a child eight years old away from a mother.

In Kashoffka, the old 'soldiers of Nicholas' were looked upon askance by the pious old men and women, for in the army the conscripts had been forced to eat pork or even to be baptized, and after a lifetime of lax habits they were not very strict in religious observances. They were, in spite of that, rugged and boisterous, and rich in stories and experiences which they poured out willingly in my hearing, enlarging my vision of the world in which I lived. I knew about Siberia, Great Russia, Little Russia, Ukrania — how the people dressed there, where the women were handsomest, which province had the deepest mud or the most vagrant hens. Now and then an old man, slightly drunk, would drill with a broomstick, while one of his companions roared commands, and some housewife near by would look from the window sadly and wag

her head from side to side, her lips moving in prayer. After I understood what military service had been, in the memories of my elders, I could feel more keenly the grief of a mother or grandmother who would throw herself on the ground or grasp at the wheels of a wagon and let herself be dragged when a boy started off for examination. I did not think it strange, either, that the Starostas of some of the near-by towns seemed to be extraordinarily prosperous.

When the horses were first hitched to the large wooden wheel which kept our machinery in motion, my brother Sam or I would sit upon the horizontal beam and drive them round and round. It was not long before they learned their work and plodded along hour after hour, blindfolded, with the reins tied up. As each new device was tried for the first time I stood near by, asking about the mechanics of it and the use to which its product was to be put. One of the simplest was the machine for chopping straw, the one which stirred me to such efforts against Fishbein. After wheat or oat straw had been chopped into pieces the size of a kernel of grain, the peasants would mix this chaff with the grain which was fed to cattle or horses, no doubt to make the beast feel he had had a much larger meal than was actually the case. For combing out wool, making flax into hemp, pressing linseed, or threshing grain, father would charge a small sum per load and sometimes took his pay in part by keeping certain of the by-products and selling them in Roshist. After the linseed were pressed, for instance, there would be a flat, oval cake the size and shape of the press. When we had collected a load, father or Sam would drive to Roshist, starting on Saturday night so that they would be back with the horses in time to start work on Monday.

Mother was still so watchful over me that I was not at that time allowed to go, but I heard that the mud in Roshist was like a sea; that oxen and horses would sink down almost out of sight; that there were houses with rooms one on top of the other, and that one of the mills was not by the riverside, but was driven by a tremendous fire which was kept burning day and night.

This period of my life is one of the most vivid to me. I remember how eager I was to wake up each morning and that before I could get out of bed some sound outside would remind me of something new and interesting that was going on. There was no monotony and the whole village had responded in a sense to our unprecedented activity. The real underlying deliberate rhythm was not broken, but as the dance music sometimes grew faster without any definite point of acceleration, the life of Kashoffka seemed to be moving with an irresistible beat. I was still interested in learning, and if now and then I was inattentive, it was because of something I knew was taking place without me. I did not lose my place at the head of the class, although I did not exert myself quite so hard to retain it. I had begun to feel that it belonged to me.

After Bessie's marriage to Feivish, they lived in a separate house, so that with all the room we had there were fewer of us to occupy it. In the daytime there were several men and women and a few girls and boys who worked for us nearly all the year round. One of these was Yashki's daughter, who was so beautiful that she had to be isolated from the men. Another was Isaac, the fourteen-year-old son of one of the shoemakers, Schmil Boursch, who also made benches for the synagogues. This shoemaker was so conscientious and pious that often

he would worry for fear that his charge for repairing a boot had been excessive, and after six or seven weeks he would return to his customer and refund one of the four kopeks which had been given him. Schmil Boursch, like Beryl the tailor, was greatly respected, and both of them had talented children. Moita, Beryl's son, learned to read the Talmud, while Isaac, the son of Schmil, attracted attention by his musical talent. While Isaac was working for us, his longing to have a violin was so strong that he decided to make one. By listening to Feivish playing and by watching his fingers, Isaac had convinced himself that he could play. In fact, he had thought so much about it that when finally he got a fiddle he was able to play a tune almost immediately, having only to learn to handle the bow in such a way that it would not tremble or slip. I became as much interested in the fiddle which was being made as Isaac was and was careful to shield him and make it possible for him to work on it when he was supposed to be toiling for father. The body and neck of the violin were not so difficult to make, because Isaac was able to find plenty of resonant wood. The tails of all the white horses in the neighborhood were plucked for the bow. But the question of strings was more troublesome. There was no hope that Isaac would be able to save enough money to buy them and the nearest place where they could have been bought was three days away. Finally we found a weed the fibers of which could be separated and stretched, and with these makeshift strings Isaac began to play.

While I was busy with Isaac, Sam was equally occupied with the good-looking girls and women who worked for us. He was then twenty years old and no one in Kashoffka was as careful about his clothes as Sam was. His

boots were polished like those of the Rotnik, his breeches were carefully creased, and his caps were always made by the blind hatmaker of Melniza, who, because of that fact, did me such a good turn years afterward. Sam was not inclined to talk much, but in the presence of a woman, instead of losing his tongue as most of the young men were likely to do, he became quite persuasive and eloquent. I soon learned to be discreet about my brother's affairs and I should not like to be less so now, but it will do no harm to say that, wherever I seemed to turn, in lonely roads or spacious warehouses, afternoons or evenings, I was almost sure to see my brother and one of the girls. In order not to disturb and anger him, for he frequently beat me up in a burst of temper, it was my practice on these occasions to hide, and I was usually obliged to hide where I could not help watching at least a part of what was taking place, and in this way I gradually began to realize what certain things were about.

A slight change in the dress of the young men became evident about that time, the leaders of style being the son of Beryl the tailor, whose election as Starosta I have described, and Sam, my brother. Some of the old people held up their hands in horror and believed the end of the world was approaching. On the high holidays, Beryl's son and Sam began to appear in white collars and cuffs, with stiff white shirt bosoms which somehow they had imported into Kashoffka. The influence was far-reaching, since Beryl was at the bottom of the social heap, while Sam was near the top. It used to take Sam hours to adjust his novel apparel. He was not accustomed to the stubborn buttonholes nor the complicated studs, which were always rolling into cracks and corners. When he entered the synagogue, thus arrayed, the elders would frown, and

for hours afterward would whisper to one another about the breaking up of time-honored customs which foreshadowed disaster for Judaism.

Of course, the elders were right. No sooner had the town got used to the sight of Sam in his white collar, which did not take place, however, until several new girls had joined the list of those already affected by his charms, than earlocks, which were worn in long curls by the Chassidim, began to grow mysteriously shorter among the young men. That was distinctly unreligious.

The first progressive step, I believe, was the shining of boots, in which Sam also took the lead. He even went so far as to have a fine ebony cane made for him by the dyak. The fact that he had freckles worried him considerably and so he used to wash his face in sour milk, hoping thus to get rid of them. The freckles remained, but some child, peeping through our windows, saw him doing it and spread the story, which, like our prodigious searches for collar buttons on holidays, became the talk of the town. As my brother would stroll down the streets, his collar carefully adjusted, his boots polished, his cane swinging, people would shake their heads and murmur: 'To think that Hannah the Saint should have such a son!'

I used to be drafted into service to help prepare Sam's elaborate toilet. For hours I would stand pouring sour milk into his hands as he tried to combat his freckles, and often I would be awakened from sleep to help hunt for a collar button. I was asked to find other articles than collar buttons, for early in life I acquired a reputation for being able to find lost objects, such as needles or fishhooks. Mother occasionally sent me to find even Sam. There were reports that he had been seen meeting girls

late Saturday night, by appointment, in the orchard which was used in the afternoon as a promenade. Sometimes he was even missing from the synagogue, where young men had begun to appear in pressed and unpatched clothes and short coats. Usually I was able to locate him and to learn at the same time which of the village girls was not at home. I was discreet, however, fearing that if I told too much Sam would pound me to a pulp.

In the midst of the general prosperity, Bessie's first baby died a few weeks after his birth, and this was interpreted by some of our neighbors as a sign of God's disapproval of the house which had been built with money earned in America. Those who worked for us and benefited by the services father was able to render them rallied to our support, but there was much murmuring in the synagogue. About that time father entered into a sort of partnership with a Russian nobleman named Versenta by which the latter was to buy large tracts of land which grew good crops of hay and father was to furnish the money for the purchase, pay for the labor, and give the nobleman a share in the profits for the use of his name. Such roundabout procedure was made necessary by the law which forbade Jews to own land.

The land was purchased by Versenta with father's money and the first crop was an unusually heavy one. Father hired a number of peasants, men and women, to mow, spread, and stack the hay, and each Saturday evening they would come to our house to be paid, looking on admiringly as I computed their wages on a slate and found almost in an instant the sum they had calculated laboriously upon their fingers. The wages were about thirty kopeks (fifteen cents) a day in summer, when the

day was long, and twenty kopeks in winter when working hours were so much shorter. At any season of the year, it was the custom to begin work at sunrise and quit when the sun set. There were no clocks, but it was known that the roosters crowed the first time at midnight, the second time at three o'clock in the morning, and the third time at six o'clock. After that it was easy to tell time by the sun and the length of the shadows. The men who watched the flocks at night were able to tell time quite accurately by means of the stars.

The hay was stacked in huge stacks shaped something like loaves of bread, the base being oblong, the sides being sheer up to a point well above the middle and forming a semi-cylindrical top. It was measured and sold in units which corresponded to the spread of a man's arms. Very tall men were ruled out. When it came time to settle, Versenta demanded a larger share than father thought he was entitled to under the agreement, but the agreement was oral, there were no witnesses, and the entire deal was really in defiance of the spirit of the law. The nobleman expected father to give in easily for fear of getting into serious trouble with the authorities and losing everything. But father had by this time come in contact with the various judges and officials enough to lose much of his awe of them. He took the case to court, and in that instance displayed legal skill which many practicing attorneys might lack to-day. Unable to claim any proprietorship in the land or the hay, he based his claim upon the services which he had rendered in harvesting the crop and part profit as compensation for money advanced. The share he had agreed to pay the nominal owner had been large enough, so that the remainder did not seem to the judge to be excessive as a payment. Father was so convincing in

his arguments that the case was decided in his favor. Versenta was furious and humiliated and became the foremost and most powerful of our enemies.

As soon as he returned from the county seat, Versenta rode out among the peasants, avoiding those who were known to be friendly to us, told them that the hay belonged to him, and that since he had no use for so much of it he had made up his mind to give it away.

'Go and take what you want,' he said to the astonished groups of peasants. 'And if any one objects, break his head for him.'

Joyfully the peasants hitched up their oxen or dragged their handcarts to the hayfield, singing and shouting and praising the nobleman's generosity. They never thought of doubting his authority. At a distance father saw them tearing down his haystacks and loading their racks. He did not know, of course, what the nobleman had told them, and so he ran among them in a rage, threatening them with arrest.

'Versenta gave it to us. The hay is ours,' the peasants said, and when father tried to remonstrate further they gathered around him menacingly and told him to go away. He lost his temper and attacked the nearest of them, so that the whole crowd pitched into him, getting more excited and resentful every minute. They overpowered father, tied his crossed hands to the back of an ox cart, and started dragging him around the field.

Sam and I, from the house, saw there was a commotion in the field and ran to see what was the matter. When we saw father being dragged at the tail of a cart and pummeled by a howling mob of peasants, we ran back to the barn, where Sam mounted one of the horses and rode away for help. I grabbed a cat-o'-nine-tails and climbed

upon the back of Dragun, a rangy black horse which had formerly belonged to a Cossack. The veteran of many a riot, Dragun knew what was expected of him before we had come within a quarter of a mile of the field. With me clinging to his mane and lashing about with the barbed whip which drew blood wherever it flicked, the old cavalry horse charged through the middle of the crowd and galloped back and forth behind the cart, scattering and trampling men and women as if they were chickens, his eyes gleaming with pride and excitement. I do not know how many years it had been since he had seen action. With Dragun and the whip I was able to hold off the crowd until the gang from our establishment and our friendly neighbors and peasants arrived. Father was untied, but his wrists were badly bruised and dislocated and his body was pounded black and blue. Versenta had had his revenge.

With his robust constitution and great store of energy, father suffered few ill effects from his beating, but mother was gravely shocked that the people among whom she had lived and whom she had helped all those years should turn against her husband. The indignity of father's having been dragged by oxen and reviled wounded her acute sensibility so deeply that it aggravated her illness and for some time afterward she was not able to leave her bed. Excitement and controversy around her always did her harm. While the new house by the river was more commodious than the others we had occupied and there were servants to help her with the housework, the change had a bad effect upon her health. The mist and dampness of the river made her ill and her sick spells came more often and lasted longer. When the peasants would hear of some one who had the power of healing or working

charms, they would come to tell us, and during the next few years we made many excursions to distant villages or to the settlements of Poles or Gypsy camps to get some new remedy which had been recommended to us. We were anxious to try everything that might be of the slightest avail.

As I have said, the antagonism which father had aroused did not manifest itself entirely in commercial rows, but was felt at times in the synagogue. Since Feivish was now one of our family, the veiled disapproval fell upon him now and then. For some years he had been invited occasionally to read the scroll during the services, a high honor which was reserved for men who were both learned and pious. To be worthy of reading the holy text, a man must be beyond reproach in character. Among the men of sterling character, however, there were few who had sufficient knowledge of Hebrew to perform the sacred duty. Feivish was liked and respected by everybody, but while the novelty of our establishment was still troubling the most conservative of the Jews, the character of Feivish was thought by some to have been tainted by contact with father's money. Besides, it was known that Feivish had acquired his knowledge unaided and this implied to the most scrupulous members of the congregation a hint of irregularity, since teaching had always been an ecclesiastical function. At any rate, one Saturday when the old ruv called upon Feivish to read the scroll, some one who had a quarrel with him over the purchase of some oxen voiced an objection. Instantly the synagogue was in whispered confusion. The elders gathered together in front to discuss the situation and father and Sam hurried forward indignantly to argue for Feivish. Two brothers in the congregation had a widespread

reputation for fighting. The younger was slight and almost hysterical, the older was sluggish and powerful. Seeing the group gesticulating by the front benches, the younger brother rushed forward and tried to take part in the dispute. He was not an educated man and had no right to mingle with the elders.

'What are you doing here? This is none of your business,' some one said to him. At this, as was usually the case, he got excited, began to babble and to wave his arms and finally burst out crying. This was the moment for his brother to rush in. Friends and enemies became confused and began swinging their fists indiscriminately. The noise of scraping benches as the other members rose from their seats and joined the free-for-all was added to the shrill voices, the stamping of feet and the thud of blows. Some of the combatants kept their feet; others rolled upon the floor, gripping another fallen antagonist with their arms and kicking at the feet which trod upon them. The dust rose up in a cloud, obscuring the candlelight, and dancing shadows played upon the somber walls. In the midst of it was a seething mass of kaftans, beards, clenched fists, and shawls. One group was centered around my father who was scattering the smaller men with each movement of his arms only to find another pack upon him before he could recover his balance. Those who had rushed outside to avoid the fight stood peering through the door and wringing their hands. The older brother of whom I have spoken was also conspicuous in the turmoil. It was assumed that he was against Feivish and my father, and so our friends, knowing this man to be the principal foe, piled on him and were tossed around like bundles of straw. At first I was too bewildered to move, but when I saw this man standing near one

READING THE SCROLL

of the heavy iron chandeliers which hung down from a beam near the center of the synagogue, I climbed upon a bench, detached one of the heavy iron candle-holders from its socket, and brought it down upon the head of Kashoffka's most dreaded fighter. He crumpled and slid to the floor and the blood upon his forehead so frightened the others that the fight stopped almost instantly. They thought the man had been killed. I was so scared that I ran out the door before they had had time to pick up the man and lay him upon one of the benches. When I was far away, I noticed that I still had the iron candle-holder in my hand.

I do not know how many extra miles I traveled during the months which followed in order not to fall into the hands of this man. He had received only a slight scalp wound, but the blow had stunned him and shaken him up pretty badly. Knowing that I had done it, both he and his brother were 'laying' for me, and it would not have been at all contrary to the ethics of the village if they had beaten me until I was unable to move, for, irrespective of size or age, the Mosaic law of 'an eye for an eye' held good. I escaped them, however, and the incident was closed. Feivish continued to read the scroll whenever called upon and no further objections were raised.

Fist-fights, of course, were an everyday occurrence. It was thus all over Russia. Only the other day I read an article in the 'New York Times' to the effect that last year the Soviet police arrested one million men on the charge of fighting, and this must have been a very small proportion of the fights which actually occurred.

'In earlier times,' the article said, 'fist-fights were recognized as a proper method of establishing the validity of court testimony. The courts based their decisions on the outcome of judicial combats.'

And so, when Feivish became authorized to read the scroll by virtue of the fact that I had cracked some one over the head with a candlestick, an old Russian precedent was followed. It was pointed out also in the 'Times' that all classes of people, from workingmen to the highest nobility, took part in the contests, which were staged either as athletic events or to square grudges, and that the fighters were not confined to the use of their fists, but used clubs or whatever else came to hand.

The two brothers who brought the controversy about Feivish to a climax were always sought out when there was fighting to be done. They cared little about the question at issue and in many instances were not able to understand it. Nearly always the actual battle came about in the same way. The younger man, who was of little use in the combat once it had got started, would become so excited at the sound of an argument that he would push himself into it. Some one would tell him to mind his own business and then he would begin to stutter and to cry. He stuttered so badly that the least excitement caused him to gasp and choke and rendered him entirely speechless. The older brother, when he saw the other one crying, would lose his head and begin to fight without knowing at all what it was about. Traders often appealed to the brothers in disputes with customers, particularly strangers. In this way the older brother lost his life. A Pole came to town to do a few errands and gave one of the storekeepers a coin which the latter thought was counterfeit. When the Pole refused to exchange the coin for another, the proprietor began calling for help and the Pole started toward the Grabley. A crowd gathered and began to follow him and the older of the brothers ran after the Pole, who was by that time fleeing from the

crowd. On the Grabley, seeing that he was about to be caught, the Pole turned and shot his pursuer dead. This was the first man ever to be shot in Kashoffka. People gathered around his body in awe and superstitious whispers spread in all directions. Some great calamity was feared, of which this sudden death was an evil sign. The children of the older brother emigrated to America several years afterward and at present are in business in Boston.

After harvest time had passed, and the marvelous feasts and celebrations by which the Russians and the Jews commemorated it were over, the foliage turned yellow and russet and brown and the somber ranks of evergreens seemed to draw their boughs closer around the trunks and settle their shoulders for the long white burden of snow. The skies grew gray, the birds were whirled away in flocks by the rising wind, the horses which plodded around in circles to turn our great wheel grew shaggy and stepped fretfully in the frosty morning. Our new location by the river robbed the winter of its former monotony. As soon as the ice had thickened and spread from bank to bank, the blacksmith set up his forge on a small island just across from our place. Peasants began to bring their oxen and their horses to be shod and built huge fires to warm them as they waited by their wagons. The clank of the hammer and the voices reached us from the blacksmith's island, and we could see the men struggling with the frightened horses or wrestling in the snow to keep warm. Their breath came out in clouds of steam and the sparks flew from the crude chimney. The horses were never shod in summer and so the blacksmith had to work hard during the cold months to provide for the long season of idleness he enjoyed while the others were work-

ing hardest. As soon as the river began to freeze, the blacksmith would begin to be more conspicuous around town, strutting here and there with a growing air of importance. In summer he spoke more softly.

We were quite as busy as the blacksmith, for the linseed and the wool were brought to us in the winter and the peasants had plenty of time on their hands, so they would loaf around the place and tell stories. The fire over which the linseed was heated kept up a steady glow, flashing its light over the boards when the kettle was lifted from the stove to the press.

In school, all our studying had to be done by candlelight. Welfl, who was my Hebrew teacher at that time, would furnish a kerosene lamp as long as his means permitted, but soon the oil would give out and he would find his money gone and the candles he made in the evenings by pouring melted fat into iron moulds would be taken from their hiding-place and lighted. The teacher was especially poor in winter, since few people died in the cold weather and he was able to earn nothing by watching or mourning the dead. Even the matter of candles was regulated by a precedent nobody questioned. During the afternoon the teacher furnished the light. For evening classes each pupil had to bring his own candle. There were times when Welfl was in such straits that we read by the light of pine knots and kindlings burning upon the brick shelf of the oven.

The schoolroom was a small room about twice as long as its breadth. A long table occupied the central space, with benches on either side. The pupils sat facing each other across the table, at the head of which sat the rabbi, or Malamed, with a cane to which were attached nine strips of hard leather lying in front of him. The whip was

kept in sight continually, and Welfl, knowing which of his pupils were backward or troublesome, seated the ones he hit the most frequently near the head of the table, so that he could reach them quicker. For ordinary lapses, Welfl lashed the offender in his seat, but in graver cases the boy was stretched out face downward on a bench, his trousers, if he had any, were hauled down around his ankles, and he was beaten with the cane and the leather thongs in the presence of the others. Some of the boys were punished regularly for stupidity, others for disrespect, until it became to them a part of the school routine. In Kashoffka parents who failed to beat their children on occasion were considered lax and unmindful of the child's welfare.

Welfl's house was near the bathhouse, at some distance from the center of the village. Because of the severe weather his pupils would bring a lunch and the lunches reflected the condition of the various families. The very poor brought black bread; those who were in better circumstances had black bread with butter or drippings; the wealthy brought white bread, cake, eggs, and sometimes a piece of chicken or a little baked cheese. Mother would always give me much more than I could eat, so that I could share the delicacies with the others. This was carried to the point that the opening of my lunch was one of the principal events of the day. Welfl soon caught on to this, in fact was not too dignified to accept a morsel himself, and he ate as eagerly as he perused the Talmud. In order to make the bad boys feel still more keenly their inferiority, Welfl would tell me not to share my lunch with them, but I felt that this was not in accordance with my mother's feelings and that the oftener a boy was caned the more his misfortune entitled him to cake and chicken.

The lessons were recited aloud and in unison, so that, although the windows were tightly shut, the sing-song voices could be heard a hundred yards away. Men and women who lived near by or who happened to be in the neighborhood often stood in the doorways a half-hour at a time, with shawls or large fur caps over their heads, swaying from side to side in time with the recitation or reading. In the afternoon there was an hour when the rabbi was accustomed to take a nap and we were allowed to play, but not to leave the room nor to make enough noise to wake the teacher. We devised simple games with buttons or pens, sharpened knives and carved the benches, and made 'cat's-cradles' out of string. If the rabbi was aroused, the whole class would have to stay after school. At night we would make shadows like devils and by means of small mirrors would flash mysterious lights upon the Talmud when Welfl was intent upon the text. Every house was at one time or another reputed to be haunted and especially that of Welfl, since it was near the bath-house and the souls of the dead had been seen walking in that neighborhood on the nights during which spirits re-visited their relatives and former habitations. Welfl was superstitious and often was frightened by the shadows and ominous sounds, but he was afraid to let us see how scared he was, for fear of driving away his pupils and spreading the idea that his place was a rendezvous of ghosts and demons.

While I am on the subject of the teachers in Kashoffka, I must not forget one who was called Der Litvick, the Lithuanian. Lithuanian Jews often wandered as far as our town and had certain peculiarities which distinguished them from their brethren in other localities. They were usually strong-minded and stubborn, well

versed in Hebrew, set in their ways, quarrelsome, and invariably they had a great liking for herring. To call a man a 'Litvick' meant to imply that he was well educated, but hard to get along with, and especially as regards his diet.

Der Litvick came to Kashoffka with no apparent purpose and left with an equal lack of ceremony about the time I was seven years old. He was short, had a long red beard slightly gray, a red nose, half-closed eyes, and he was always drunk. At first he was regarded with some suspicion. 'Who is this stranger?' people said. But it was learned that he was a scholar, in the Talmudic sense of the word, and so he was entrusted with the higher education of some of the young men. Sam was one of his first pupils, and others followed. Der Litvick occupied a room in the house of a widow much younger than himself and who used to earn her living by working hard in the fields each day. Some of the women even went to work on the railroad when it was built through Manievitz later. So each day Der Litvick would try to teach the boys, and I believe he was a free-thinker and stressed general education rather than Talmudic studies, which for a Lithuanian is unusual. At any rate, the widow soon became his wife. For to cohabit with a man learned in the Torah would secure her a place in Heaven. Der Litvick's evenings were spent in a pleasant drunken haze which no doubt compensated for the narrow-mindedness of his neighbors.

Welfl's dread that he would suffer because of ghost stories was well founded, because they were easily spread. Impenetrable darkness settled down upon the village, the surrounding fields, and the thick pine woods on winter nights when the moon and stars were obscured. The river ice snapped, twigs crackled, and hungry beasts prowled on the outskirts of each settlement. The roads

were unlighted, and whenever a peasant was forced out-of-doors to do an errand in the night he carried a lantern, usually made from a pumpkin and held snugly under his arm. The effect at a distance was uncanny. On moonlight nights the erratic shadows made the landscape more terrifying. I was once the cause of establishing one of the most tenacious legends of the village.

On the night of Tichibu, before Yom Kippur, it was the custom for the men to sleep in the synagogue wearing white socks, and the elaborate ceremonies in connection with the day of atonement attracted my curiosity and interest when I was very young. I was hardly able to walk before I used to tease my mother to let me go with Feivish to the synagogue on that special night and to remain there, as he did, until morning. She was unwilling for me to stay away so long, but finally promised me that I should go as soon as I was old enough. Each year I tried to convince her that the time had come and soon after father's return I got her permission. Every one took off his boots at the entrance of the synagogue, and early in the evening it was crowded. The elders stretched out in the most comfortable places on the floor or the benches and I was left to do as best I could. The night was hot. All doors and windows were tightly closed. My habitual drowsiness at bedtime sent me off to sleep, but the hard floor and the overpowering smell of feet woke me within an hour and I was unable to go to sleep again. Snores rasped in every key, my head ached, my back was chilled. Still, I had begged so hard and so long for the privilege that I was ashamed to let on that I did not enjoy the experience. I lay awake, suffocating with the ever-increasing stench, through what seemed to me the longest night of the world, and finally, about three o'clock in the

morning, I stifled my pride and, stepping over the forms of the hardier worshipers, sorted out my boots from the pile and started on the run for home.

Now, on that night, the women left alone at home sleep lightly, for at four in the morning every one must be in the synagogue, and those who are afraid of oversleeping the hour hire the sexton to arouse them in time. Besides the necessity for early rising and the absence of the men, sleep is made still more fitful by the belief that on that night the souls of all the ancestors come to earth to see how their loved ones are getting along, and with them, as always, are likely to come vindictive ghosts with age-old scores to settle or horrible secrets to reveal. The fear which was in the air and the unaccustomed hour made me hurry faster and faster, and when I reached our house I tapped on the window nearest mother's bed, so that she might let me in. The door, of course, was bolted more tightly than usual. A tap on a windowpane in the dead of night and against the country stillness carries a long way. Mother, sensitive to the atmosphere of dread which enwrapped the village, was terrified and did not speak or move. I rapped again, louder, and this time I spoke, so she got up and let me in. But many other folks had heard the rapping and in their nervousness had thought it had fallen upon their own windows. Most of them were too frightened to investigate, and spent the remaining hours of the night staring into the corners, their teeth chattering and their knees knocking together. The few who had the courage to look out the window saw the mists rising and swirling above the river and the tree-tops, all the objects distorted by the shadows, and rushed back to their beds repeating prayers and stifling confessions of their blackest sins. When the humble sexton made his rounds in our

vicinity, his first knock was responded to with tales of the ghost which had rapped on the windows, and as he passed from house to house, getting variations of the same story, he began to be frightened himself and at last ran home. Early the same day I was told the story and realized that I was the source of it, but I did not disillusion any one. It gave me a sense of superiority to know the truth about an incident which had misled so many older people. As a child, the superstitious gossip with which I was surrounded seemed amusing and dramatic to me, but never true. It was a sort of make-believe, I thought, and I would have considered myself mean not to pretend to enter into the spirit of it a little.

There were times when I could easily have believed anything, for I was deeply affected by the timbre of voices and the sincerity of the credulous faces. The moods of nature nearly always carried mine along with them. When I think of the seasons in Kashoffka, they are frequently typified by the state of the trees on the Grabley, perhaps because I looked in that direction so often for travelers or prospects or friends. Nobody knows when Kashoffka was settled nor even when the Grabley was built. The trees, which stood in long straight rows on either side of the roadway and which had been planted to anchor the dike against the floods, were enormously tall, but the water at their feet and the rich mud which was dumped in from time to time nourished them as well as the gardener of the richest estate of the Tsar could have done. Their leaves were luxurious and perfectly formed, their branches entwined and mingled overhead as the crude wagons rumbled into the town. Even the bark suggested vigor and hardiness. In spring, while the river was raging and swirling around their

ancient roots, the buds burst mockingly, holding their fresh and fragrant leaves, crinkled and still undersized, above the waters which were too muddy and angry to reflect them. In the heat of summer the large leaves drooped in clusters and let their shadows glide from west to east in patterns which shrank beneath the branches and then were stretched far out again. Feivish had told me of a glass chandelier in the priest's house which threw hundreds of rainbows from the candlelight to the walls and the floor. When the leaves had fallen and the bare limbs of the great trees creaked and wrestled in the wind, and the snow spread out for miles around made the trunks look black and threatening, sometimes in the lacework of the twigs the mist would be caught and frozen, and if the gray skies cleared at sundown the ice in the tree-tops would kindle, until the Grabley was hung with rows of chandeliers casting tinted lights in all directions. In somber weather bare trees chained with ice brought me a strange presentiment of death. I had seen death, at the time of the plague, and on that very Grabley when the man I feared was shot by the Pole. One of Bessie's babies had died almost in my hands. But death had not touched me deeply. I did not understand it. I could not imagine any one like my father or mother as dead, and so I was sad and often could not help crying because of the death of the summer and all things which grew in the ground.

Each year my sister Bessie had a baby and each year the baby died. At the least sign of the infant's illness, Bessie would rush to the synagogue and before the open doors which revealed the scrolls would promise to give all sorts of things to the poor. None of the children died at birth, for the midwife who tended the Jewish women was

experienced and skillful, and since there was no one to diagnose the illness Bessie believed that an evil spell had been cast over her. In each house where there was a baby, a cradle was suspended from ropes made fast to the roof beams at all four corners of the room. Whoever was near at hand would give the cradle a push which would set it swinging violently and the infants, who soon became accustomed to the rocking motion, would cry and shriek the moment the cradle came to rest. Then some one would give them another shove to quiet them. The result was that the more a baby cried, from no matter what cause, the higher and oftener he was sent swinging through the air. The presence to-day of many good naturalized citizens in the United States is proof that such treatment is not always fatal. One day I was alone in the house with Bessie's baby and kept him swinging as usual. I noticed after a time that he was strangely silent and that his face looked queer, and suddenly I became frightened and ran for my mother. The baby was dead. Bessie wailed and tore her hair and had to be held forcibly, so that she would not do harm to herself.

The extreme act of piety, and one which was reserved for the rich and most virtuous, was to donate a scroll to the synagogue. This mother did, in an effort to turn the tide of Bessie's misfortunes and to save the future grandchildren. The writing of a scroll involved months of the most painstaking labor on the part of a rabbi especially designated for the work.

The old ruv, or chief rabbi, was open to consultation only in the gravest cases and the ordinary problems of the congregation were taken up with the gabba, or rabbi's assistant, who in Kashoffka was suspected of looking out for his own interests more carefully than those of his petitioners. I have heard many times that a similar situation existed in other communities. There was something about the office of go-between which attracted crafty men. If a girl had reached the age of eighteen and had not been married, her parents would consult the gabba to see what could be done to save her from the fate of being an old maid. At that age she was really considered a spinster and pitied by everybody. The parents were blamed and lost caste. One of the most frequent applications to the gabba would be for special prayers to ensure long life. These prayers cost half a rouble. In each case, a fee was paid. When a boy was approaching military age, his father always appealed to the gabba, who would listen to his story, fix the charges, and promise to bring the case to the attention of the rabbi, who was in strict seclusion, studying and meditating. We had no difficulty in reaching the rabbi himself, on account of mother's philanthropy, and the saintly old man took great interest in my progress in school and the rabbinical branch of our family which I was to establish. In distant cities were rabbis who had a far-reaching reputation for the interpretation of dreams, and mother was in correspondence with several of these, for her dreams were strange and troubled and she was constantly wondering about their meaning. Once, I remember, she dreamed that a crowd of peasants were cutting down the trees in our yard and our orchard, and that one tree grew rapidly as the others were falling. The rabbi wrote that this dream meant that, although her life might be extinguished, I would be left to carry on her work. This interpretation she constantly repeated to me, counseling me to be humble in achievement.

The man who had corresponding functions in the Russian church to those of the gabba in the Jewish commu-

nity, the dyak, whom I have already mentioned as friendly to Feivish, had a reputation for grafting and other irregularities more serious than any attributed to the rabbi's assistant. It is natural for people to suspect officials with whom they come in direct contact and to revere the holy men who keep themselves aloof and appear only in vestments and on solemn occasions.

But there had been a chief rabbi in a near-by town in whose family had occurred a scandal so frightful that no man or woman dared to speak of it above a whisper, and for a decade afterward secret prayers were said throughout the whole district in the hope that God would not lay waste the entire land and annihilate both Jews and Gentiles as punishment for that incomparable sin. All this took place when I was young enough so that people assumed I could neither understand nor remember. The rabbi was quite well advanced in years when he took a second wife, the first having been barren. He was a learned man, gentle and of imposing stature, and had a reputation for piety and strict application to his studies which had reached the synagogues of cities he had never seen. It was said that, while thinking of God, he would stand immobile for hours, oblivious to everything which took place around him, and often would have to be led gently by the hand when it was time for him to take his meals, so reluctant was he to descend to worldly thoughts from the realms to which the study of the Talmud had admitted him. With the idea of leaving a son to continue his work, the rabbi took a young wife, the daughter of one of his colleagues in Lodz, I believe, and who, in spite of her shorn hair and conventional clothes and headdress, had large dark eyes that were luminous and sad, a complexion like ivory, and her hands and feet were so beautiful that strangers would stop in the road to admire them. Many people from Kashoffka had seen her and each one was extravagant in praise of her looks, but to pious women moving in a narrow sphere the gift of unnatural beauty is always associated with woe and devastation. Just about the time of the rabbi's second marriage there was sent to that town a handsome, distinguished-looking Russian, the sadness of whose face led the villagers to believe that he had left a place much more alluring because of some misdeed or sudden sorrow. He was made the keeper of the Government seal, and the keeper of the Government seal in a town of two hundred inhabitants, a week's journey from the county seat, is not hampered by his official duties more than forty-five minutes a year. This man, just reaching the full vigor of his age, clever, amiable, and handsome, paced the muddy streets or strode through the brush with his gun and kept his candle burning late at night, when passers-by could see him sitting aimlessly by the window, his food untouched, his cap and scarf still on, too bored to read the few books he had brought, weary of exchanging commonplaces with the priest, afraid to drink, since vodka might drive him still more to action where action was utterly futile.

After a while, however, the tall man seemed to get accustomed to village life and to like it. He ate heartily, greeted every one he met with a pleasant 'God bless you,' tossed silver coins to the poor as he passed on his horse, and invited distant officials to share his hunting trips. His table was cleared promptly in the evening and he sipped his liqueur with a smile on his face, trimmed his beard before the mirror, and sang to himself in a loud, hearty voice, rollicking songs of the steppes and of the tavern. He showed more respect for the priest, and in every

way showed signs of having conquered his grief and his ennui.

The rabbi had no sons, but he had plenty of daughters and they were a curiously assorted lot, some beautiful and strong and wild, others deformed or dull. Two of them had large dark eyes and tiny feet, like their mother, and at least two more had clear blue eyes and straight honey-colored hair which hung below their waists. The mother, still under thirty when her sixth child was born and even more lovely than she had been as a bride, could not, according to the comment of some of the villagers, forget her old home and the life of the city, for suddenly she languished and died, after a period in which she was thought to be insane. Just after the birth of one of the ugly children, a girl with a big head who rolled her eyes and frothed at the mouth a bit, the rabbi's wife got a mania for bathing. Every day, sometimes twice and three times, she would rush to the public bath-house, thrust coins into the hand of the keeper and implore him to heat the water quickly, that she felt unclean and must purify herself. She grew paler and weaker each day, and her beauty, although it held its own a surprisingly long time, faded at last. Her bones began to show beneath her pallid skin, food made her sick, and she died.

I neglected to say that two years before she died, the Russian official was forgiven whatever he had done and recalled to Moscow, where, notwithstanding his joy at being reinstated and seeing his old friends again, he often said that he missed, in a way, the strange quiet of the village, the frank and honest peasants and the abundance of the game.

What led so many people to believe a terrible and protracted sin had been committed, all the more abhorrent

to God since it took place in an atmosphere of extraordinary sanctity, was the fact that all the rabbi's daughters who were handsome and strong went bad, as the saying goes, and the others, who were unpromising physically, raised the rabbi grandchildren who were all somewhat afflicted. No direct evidence was ever produced, and yet all the people of that village seemed to sense, from the vibrations of the air, what was going on. At the time their suspicions seemed to them so monstrous that they were afraid to communicate them freely. As years went on, and neighbors compared their memories, they became more and more convinced that their worst fears were justified, but what impressed them most of all was the calmness and austerity of the old rabbi, who, so far from being disturbed by what would have been considered by weaker men to be overwhelming misfortunes, was not diverted from his study of the Talmud by the death of his beloved wife nor the idiosyncrasies of his many daughters. He still spent hours in rapt meditation and still had to be reminded that it was mealtime.

In Kashokffa there were three synagogues. The orthodox one was the largest and was presided over by the old white-haired ruv, who was much interested in my education and my prospects for a rabbinical career. Our family was always of that congregation. The other two synagogues were attended by Chassidim, and the rivalry between them was so keen that rough-and-tumble fights in support of one or the other of the tzaddikim, or wonder workers, were almost daily occurrences. One of the sects of Chassidim was composed of followers of a rabbi from Trisk. They had the utmost faith in his ability to perform miracles and to interpret the Holy Word infallibly. The rival Chassidim were followers of the Kalina rabbi and

they were as devoted to him and as sure he had the best possible standing with the Higher Power. It is hard to say which group was the more hilarious or fantastic. The orthodox worshipers looked down upon both of them.

The enmity between the orthodox rabbis and the Chassidim was of long standing before I was born, for Chassidism grew up out of reaction and dissatisfaction with the dry Talmudic studies and the endless quibbles of the learned over questions which seemed of little importance to the layman. Israel Ball-Shem-Tob, who spread Chassidism throughout Volhynia and the rest of Poland, started his career as a magician and cabalist, curing diseases by means of incantations, herbs, and prayer. He had a way of appealing to the common people and believed religion was getting out of touch with the masses and becoming the sole property of scholars who were somewhat snobbish. From a healer he grew to be a religious teacher and everywhere met with success in spite of the fact that the rabbis denounced him immediately. His doctrine had two basic ideas, first, that God is everywhere; second, the interaction of the lower and the upper worlds. Elaboration of the latter by imaginative and credulous minds created some marvelous and impressive superstitions and rites. The idea was borrowed from the Cabala, which Chassidim studied fervently after years of preparations which included hundreds of miles of wandering from town to town and months of discussion. 'The Dybbuk,' a play which had great success in America and elsewhere a few years ago, portrays a typical Chassid community and the solemn ceremony involving the excommunication of the soul of a man already dead.

Communion with God is an important element of Chassidism, and this may be attained, they believe, by

concentration of one's thoughts upon Him and by attributing to Him all the occurrences in one's life. Dubnow, the Jewish historian, explained Chassidism by the doctrine that the essence of faith lies in the emotions, not in the intellect. That laid the Chassidim open to attack from both the other strong Jewish elements, the 'German' intellectuals for whom Talmudic learning was too narrow and restricted, and the orthodox Talmudic scholars who could not consent to see less learned men step in between the people and themselves.

In order to achieve communion with God, the Chassidim tried to throw off their material selves in prayer, and in so doing leaped in the air, shouted, jerked their bodies about, shook as if they had the ague, sang, and very often drank to excess, for alcohol is an easy way to produce the ecstasy they believed was pleasing to God. Excessive fasting and such ascetic practices as were common with the orthodox were thought injurious and sinful by the Chassidim, who devoted themselves to keeping lively and cheerful. What made Chassidism really popular was the fact that men by means of its doctrines could come near to the Deity by good thoughts and works rather than long and painful study. Tzaddikim sprang up and attained fame for their cures and prophecies and this appealed directly to the popular imagination.

In Kashoffka, where all the Jews had been neighbors and had grown up together, there was not the extreme bitterness between sects which existed elsewhere. All made merry or mourned together, and still there were subtle differences. The orthodox had picked up many of the superstitions of the Chassidim, who for good measure took over many of the strict pious observances of the orthodox.

Long before I was born, Kashoffka had a tzaddik or wonder-worker, a rabbi whose fame spread throughout the country. His descendant, who was the rabbi during my childhood, although he was much revered because of the reputation of his famous ancestor, did not possess his power and influence. The Chassidim, who were disciples of the rabbi from Trisk, among whom Feivish often worshiped, once persuaded the famous young rabbi to make a visit to Kashoffka, and this was the occasion for one of the wildest celebrations which ever occurred in the village. The old Trisk rabbi had died a short time before, and had left a son who was supposed to have inherited the powers of his father. The young man was known to be a very holy man and a brilliant scholar, but in order to strengthen his relationship with the followers of his father, he decided to make what the Chassidim called a tour of the world, which meant our district. For months in advance, preparations were made in Kashoffka to receive him. It was only after a long discussion that it was decided where the holy man should be lodged. A distant relative of ours, whose name was Olesh, was finally chosen for this honor, owing to the influence of his two sons and their Feivish. There were three beautiful girls in the household, all unmarried, and since the rabbi was unmarried, the girls had the highest hopes that by some miracle they would attract the attention of this great man. Their dresses were made with the greatest care and they were especially careful to keep their caps and kerchiefs over their hair, since it would have been most improper for a rabbi to gaze upon a woman's hair. The rabbi was due to arrive on Friday, and in his journey previous to his visit to Kashoffka he had picked up about thirty wagon-loads of followers, who went with him from

town to town, singing and dancing and worshiping wherever he stopped. From Kashoffka, an even longer procession of welcome set out, some families riding in wagons, others following on foot; and the two parties met about a half-day's journey from the town, joined forces, and accompanied the rabbi across the Grabley and into our village. Feivish was prominent among those who welcomed the rabbi, but he refused to take me with him, for fear that I might be crushed in the excitement. Those of us who were left in the village watched anxiously across the river for the first cloud of dust heralding the approach of the great man and his escorts. The sound of singing could be heard before the forces of men and horses were discernible. Bells jangled on the wide horse collars, the animals, sensing the importance of the occasion, stepped high and kept their ears alert. As the procession came nearer the town, the songs became more fervent, and ecstatic men danced in front of the wagon in which the rabbi was sitting on a few pillows. My mother and I were waiting near Olesh's house. I saw a thin, pale, emaciated young man with very curly locks of hair on his cheeks, wearing a big three-cornered fur hat and just a suggestion of a beard, step from the wagon, and as he was about to enter the door, stop to kiss the Mazazy — the name of God, written upon parchment, which is placed at the entrance of each pious Hebrew's house. The house was crowded with Chassidim, and, as in all the feasts and celebrations of that merry sect, drinking began at once and was continued with great abandon throughout the day.

When, at sunset, the Sabbath began, the rabbi did not go to one of the synagogues, but in his honor the scrolls were brought to him and services conducted in the house.

A great table was set up, around which the followers of the rabbi sat listening breathless to his dissertations upon the Torah, joining in the singing of the Psalms; some still in doubt as to the powers of this young man, others completely convinced that he had inherited all the greatness of his father.

The rabbi slept in a room which had been decorated with white from floor to ceiling. Nearly every one in town had contributed a pillow or piece of bedclothing, in the belief that if the holy man touched it, it would become holy, and would work wonders for them for years afterward.

The next day, Saturday, was even more eventful. In the morning, services were held and the noon meal occupied several hours. Again, the most learned of the Kashoffka Chassidim gathered around the table, asking questions concerning the law and the prophets, drinking in every word and gesture the young man let fall. Then the men and women waiting outside were allowed to come in, and the young rabbi, as if inspired, closed his eyes and raised his hands to Heaven, letting golden words and holy thoughts shower down upon his followers. The singing began, and the mood of the crowd became hysterical. Only those who knew Hebrew understood what the young man had said, but others had been awed by his saintly bearing. As the songs began, the Chassidim began to sway back and forth, clapping their hands in time. The louder they sang, the surer they were that God would hear them. The dessert was made of a choice combination of fruits and other ingredients baked together in a huge bowl. The rabbi, of course, took the first portion, but it was the belief that whoever reached the dish first would receive a blessing. So, the instant the rabbi's hand

was withdrawn, everybody within reaching distance made a dive for the bowl upsetting and emptying it instantly.

That night, the rabbi presided at a special celebration in honor of the moon in the holy place which had been for generations set aside in Kashoffka for that purpose. The next morning, he left town escorted by his thirty wagon-loads of followers and several others among the inhabitants of Kashoffka who had decided to go with him to the end of his journey. He blessed the household, the village, the beautiful girls, who tried to get near enough to him so that their garments would touch his. For years afterward the bed in which the rabbi had slept was considered holy. If a girl was anxious about getting a husband, she would ask permission to sleep one night in this bed. Married women who had no children often slept there, in the hope that their prayers for offspring would be answered.

The young Trisk rabbi became a tradition, which lived as long as the village itself, in fact, even longer, since it is remembered by the survivors of Kashoffka.

Sending a message to God in the hand of a corpse or recalling the soul of a dead man in order to pronounce excommunication were extreme measures, even for Chassidim, but A. S. Sachs tells of a case in a village of our district where a lawsuit was instituted against Almighty God. A man he calls Reb Itzel had suffered a series of misfortunes. His son-in-law, a scholar, had fallen into such bad habits that he smoked cigarettes on the Sabbath; his wife had pined away and died of grief on that account; his daughter had given birth to a still-born baby after her husband had run away to Berlin and she was approaching death. Reb Itzel locked himself into his

room and after a long vigil ordered two large wax candles to be lighted in front of the ark. In the evening he visited all the schools and asked the teachers and pupils to come to the synagogue the next morning. He made the same request of the elders of the town.

They all arrived at the synagogue in the morning, Mr. Sachs relates, and after offering prayers and reciting the psalms they saw Reb Itzel enter in his stocking feet and wearing his ceremonial shawl. Without a word he walked straight to the ark, drew aside the curtains, opened the folding doors and called out in imperious tones:

'I, Itzi ben Avrohom, from the city of G., hereby call the God of Justice to a trial before the Law! I demand of you, Lord of the Universe, to tell me wherein I have sinned. What have I done to be punished thus? My virtuous wife, Deborah, died before her time. My only son is worse than dead. And now you send the Angel of Death to snatch from me my only daughter! I summon you now to the Court of Justice. I request you to state publicly and before this assemblage of Jews and the Tables of the Law, what my sins are!

'Holy Torah!' Reb Itzel turned his face toward the scrolls within the ark, 'Holy Torah, listen to my pleas and let the Lord himself inform me of the sins and transgressions committed by me!

'Pious and good Jews!' — Reb Itzel now addressed himself to the men engaged in their prayers — 'Have I ever harmed any one of you? If so, tell it now to the Holy Torah. This is the time to tell all.

'Little children,' he said to the schoolboys, 'did I at any time harm any one of you? Come now, say it. Be my witnesses.'

Nobody knew what to say or do, and, unfortunately,

while the strange ceremony was proceeding, Reb Itzel's daughter died.

There was continuous activity in all the synagogues of Kashoffka, and the men who assembled there were divided by their interests and their station in life into three groups. Those who occupied the front of the synagogue, nearest the altar, congregated day and night to read the Talmud and to debate all questions relating to religion, and the religious codes applied not only to theology and ethics, but entered the provinces of medicine and the law and even commerce. Instead of the hush which is generally associated with libraries and study rooms here, the old walls of the synagogue echoed with the sound of harsh voices, for every one repeated aloud what he was reading and raised his voice in argument so that it might be heard above all other voices. The women did not enter, but had a separate room for prayer and left for home immediately. As the men, young and old, were reading, they would sway their bodies from side to side accompanying the rise and fall of the text. The younger students hoped to achieve high rabbinical distinction, the elders to reach the Garden of Eden when they had lived their one hundred and twenty years. One of the questions which was debated for days at a time was whether there was additional liability on the part of the owner of an ox which had gored a pregnant cow if in consequence the calf had been born dead. Some argued that since the calf was born dead and had never had life or being, it could not sustain an injury and could not be owned. Others took the position that the calf would have had life if its mother had not been hurt by the ox, and therefore the man who would have owned it had been deprived of a prospective possession. The more obvious the question at issue, the more

the students delighted in convincing any one of the contrary side.

The middle group in the synagogue consisted of business men, many of whom were ox dealers from some distant community who were stranded in Kashoffka because of the Sabbath or weather conditions. The local merchants would come to listen to the tales of the travelers and thus gain their only knowledge of the outside world. These men of trade would add their din to that of the pious group before the altar. The third group was made up of men who, because of their lowly occupations or their want of any occupation whatsoever, were not considered worthy to mingle with the more prosperous merchants. The cobblers, tailors, shoemakers, servants, and the old 'soldiers of Nicholas' crowded together at the foot of the synagogue, but it happened as in life that the place of least distinction was the most comfortable of all, for at the tail end of the room was the ribbi, or hot brick wall, which furnished all the heat and rested the backs of those who sat there.

My father, in order to improve his standing among those of the congregation who looked askance upon the riches he had gathered in America, decided to paint and redecorate the old orthodox synagogue, which had been badly neglected and was in need of repair. As unpretentious as it seemed to us then, if that same synagogue could be transported to this country, it and all its contents would be worth their weight in solid gold as antiques. The altar and especially the ark in which the scrolls were kept were fine pieces of handiwork, the latter being elaborately carved with representations of birds, animals, trees, and landscape, all of which had symbolic significances. The ark was so old that the colors which had

been applied to the carvings to bring out their value had almost entirely disappeared, and there was no one in Kashoffka capable of retouching it. Other features of the woodwork also required experts, so father sent far away for the necessary craftsmen, and for weeks the inhabitants gathered around to watch these men at their work. While stopping in Kashoffka, the wood-carvers and decorators were lodged in the various houses, most of them in the houses of the poor, who were glad to get the small profit derived from boarding the strangers.

How often in the history of art has it appeared that the men who beautified the churches and cathedrals with immortal paintings and sculpture had not the lofty character which their works might lead one to expect from them! While the decoration of Kashoffka's humble synagogue has no place in the annals of art, it at least reflects the characteristics of incidents of more renown. The best wood-carver father had imported was a very handsome man, a perfect precursor of the late Rudolph Valentino. And shortly after he left our village, the daughter of his host began to gain in weight. It is needless to say that the fare in that household was not hearty enough to cause its members to grow stout. There was much whispering and the young woman disappeared.

Wanderers do not change their habits as they change their nationalities, for in the year after the war a chance client strayed into my office, not knowing where I was born nor where I had come from. As I looked at him, his features seemed not only extraordinarily handsome, but very familiar, and at once the scene of the painters and carvers in our old synagogue flashed back to me, and with it the last echoes of the whispers which followed. The man remembered Kashoffka and the synagogue, and

with human frailty in mind and the thought that time heals everything I did not mention the sequel of his visit. From a twinkle in his eye, I assumed that he appreciated my consideration. After thirty years, our paths had crossed for a second time, and surely on such an occasion reproaches have no part.

When misdeeds were committed and the blame could not be readily fixed, an old method was sometimes resorted to among the peasants and is said to have originated with the former occupant of the nobleman's estate across the river. A proverb, 'A thief's hat burns his head,' resulted from it. Years before a thief stole some things belonging to the nobleman. The latter lined up all the peasants in the village, summoned by elaborate mystic rites the znacher, one who communes with the spirits, and told the peasants that after an incantation he was going to clap his hands and the znacher would set fire to the cap of the man who had committed the theft. When the nobleman clapped his hands, one peasant grabbed his hat in a panic and threw it on the ground. He was beaten until he felt on fire all over.

The Rotnik, in investigating petty crimes, did not take as much pains as the nobleman. If he suspected that some member of a family had done wrong, he lined them all up in the center of the village, called the neighbors to witness, and then walking from one end of the line to the other he slapped the faces of the father, mother, and children. If the offense was a trifle more serious, he would then order the family to face about and would kick them, one after another, resoundingly, with his highly polished boot. Usually he would arrange them in order of their size and his instinctive sense of form would prompt him to kick harder and more elaborately as the size of his

target increased. The onlookers would enjoy with suppressed delight this queer crescendo, at the same time trembling lest the Rotnik should take it into his head to practice his footwork on them. The musical effect of this performance was considerable, since each child would cry when he was kicked, and so with each step the Rotnik advanced up the scale a fresh voice would be added to the chorus. If the children did not yell, they would expect the Rotnik to kick them again.

In the same way the pious believed that God was everywhere; the less scrupulous of my townspeople were sure the Devil was lurking in every corner. Misfortune was interpreted as the punishment of God, and often, as in the case of poor Reb Itzel, caused its recipient to rack his brains to discover the sin which had brought upon him the wrath of the Almighty. All sorts of natural phenomena were attributed to the work of the Evil One or his cohort of lesser devils which followed Jew and peasant alike through dark forests, lurked around graveyards and lonely places, played pranks, caused pain or suffering or loss, and frightened the wits out of those who thought they saw them.

The very pious people in Kashoffka were continually expecting the Messiah to arrive. The prophecies of the Old Testament were interpreted in various ways by different men, so that hardly a month arrived which was not believed by some one to be the appointed time. It was generally agreed that hard times and important evils would precede the Messiah's coming. In Kashoffka times were always hard, so when the war between Russia and China broke out, several of the most pious men jumped at the conclusion that such an event must be the one which was to herald the Messiah's coming. They sold

all of their goods, disposed of their homes and cattle, sat for days praying, and cleansed themselves at the public bath. Several of our neighbors were ruined financially by this belief, and after they had been convinced that their calculations were wrong, were obliged to start life all over again.

Among the exotic birds my father bought to beautify our new establishment were three fowls called African hens. There were two hens and a rooster, in fact. They were shaped something like turkeys, but the male had brightly colored feathers, and all three were beautifully marked. Whenever father got hold of anything strange or unique he applied the adjective 'Americanski' to it, regardless of geography, and the African hens excited so much admiration that he soon began to term them 'Americanski hens,' and so in the minds of the people of Kashoffka the fowls shifted the continent of their origin.

We soon found that the Americanski hens laid eggs with a shell which was thick and almost unbreakable. The eggs were smaller than ordinary hen's eggs, and slightly darker in color. The Russian peasants at Eastertide play a game with eggs for all kinds of stakes ranging from the eggs themselves to the love of a girl. They select what they believe to be the strongest eggs, sounding the shell upon their teeth to test its thickness. Then they boil the eggs and color them with vegetable dyes or stains from bark or clay. Each man puts his egg in his waist, above the belt, and when he meets a friend, they try the strength of their eggs. One man holds his egg between his thumb and forefinger so that only the small end of the egg is exposed. The other strikes this with the tip of his own egg, and the man whose egg breaks is the loser. Often the game is played for money, and when some

particular egg lasts through many contests, its owner gains a reputation which extends over many villages. A fisherman named Ivan, known as Ivan the fool, used to stay around our place a great deal, for nearly everybody fished and his occupation brought him little revenue. He worked now and then for father and was always friendly. When the African hens arrived, Ivan admired them very much, and, as soon as father told him about the durability of their eggs, Ivan bought two or three of the eggs, boiled them hard in preparation for Easter, and colored them bright blue.

Now, up to that time, no one had paid any particular attention to Ivan. His calling was lowly, his means almost non-existent, his appearance not prepossessing. So when he edged his way into the group that was playing with their eggs, no one expected much of him. A man who owned several hens and was known to be a good judge of eggs finally got around to playing with Ivan and was astonished at the ease with which the fisherman shattered his egg. He asked to try another, with the same result. That afternoon was the beginning of a long period of improvement in Ivan's affairs. He broke every egg which was brought to him, won eggs, kopeks, trinkets, jackknives, and even the attention of the prettiest girls who had hitherto passed him by. He even won a blouse that was in much better shape than his own, so he washed his face in the river, put on his new garment, and, with the same egg with which he had started the day, played through a long successful evening. Onlookers from other villages told their neighbors, and the next day eggs were brought from all around the countryside and none of them proved a match for that of Ivan.

The bewildered losers got together to discuss their

misfortune and unanimously decided that the Devil had hidden himself in Ivan's egg. Ivan, hearing whispering to that effect, let them think so. He let it appear that he was on intimate terms with that particular devil and could make him do all sorts of other tricks, such as curing diseases and foretelling the future. From a poor fisherman, Ivan developed into a znacher, or conjuror, and was called upon to treat all kinds of chronic or acute complaints, to increase the fertility of domestic animals or even of women, to bring rain when the crops were dry; in fact, to do nearly everything Beryl the tailor had promised the voters in case of his election. Ivan no longer fished. He did not hang around our house looking for odd jobs. He finally took to combing his hair and tried once or twice to wear boots, but they hurt his feet. Almost daily wagons would arrive from other villages bearing troubled people who wanted to consult Ivan. Occasionally his patients recovered and his guesses as to the future coincided with later developments. He was as reliable as the other soothsayers and healers and felt the dignity of his new position.

One day, unfortunately for Ivan, the attention of another peasant who used to loiter in our yard was attracted by the brilliantly colored fowl which father explained to him was an Americanski rooster. The Americanski hens were usually to be found near their consort and father went on to say that their eggs were very tough and somewhat smaller than hens' eggs.

'The son of a seacook!' is a fair equivalent in American to what the peasant ejaculated in Russian. He did not refer to the hen. Before father had finished, this man set out looking for Ivan, who, when confronted, was not quick-witted enough to deny that he had been using

Americanski eggs. Ivan was not only beaten up, but his reputation collapsed in a single day. He had lost the habit of work, and so it was with difficulty that he returned to his lowly occupation of fisherman, at which he nearly starved. His shirts soon became tattered, the girls again spurned him on holidays, and he was forgotten.

The fate of the Americanski rooster was even more tragic. He was a most unusual bird in appearance and temperament, for his neck feathers were bright vermilion and he seemed to realize he was a superior bird. We had hundreds of hens, which used to wander about the place taking care of themselves, eating what was thrown around and laying eggs in all sorts of unexpected corners. The Americanski rooster's sense of caste did not prevent his consorting with ordinary hens, and the hens took such a fancy to him that other hens belonging to our neighbors joined the brood and followed him from morning until night, laying eggs on our premises. Now we had so many hens that a few extra ones did not matter, but our poorer neighbors missed every pullet and began to complain that our red rooster had the Devil in him. Whoever appeared to claim a hen we allowed to take away one, and this got around town until men who had never owned hens appeared with accusations of abduction against our rooster. Father, at last, had to shut down on every one. It was no use anyway, for the hens taken back home would return to our yard the next morning. For a long time threats were made to poison the Americanski bird, and one day we found him stiff and dead.

There was something in the organization of Kashoffka which made it susceptible to such radical disturbances whenever anything new or strange was introduced there. Before father started importing bright-colored fowls, it

was known that certain doves would lure away others of the opposite sex and fill a man's dovecote in that fashion, and disputes had often arisen between the owners of the doves and the man who came into possession of them through the vagaries of their affections.

The next step by which I became further involved in father's ventures, after my rivalry with the son of Idey Leib Fishbein, occurred about the time the synagogue was decorated. Not only did I handle the cash on Saturday nights, but I also helped with the collecting and thus learned many things about human nature which have been useful to me since. This phase of my activities calls to mind at once a most resourceful man called Nutka Ganiff, who lived next door to the priest. He got his nickname, which means thief, because in a near-by town called Silk there was a peasant also named Nutka and who was famous for his thievery. In the case of Kashoffka's Nutka, the term was bestowed in admiration rather than scorn, and implied that Nutka was so shrewd that he could get money from others in business as easily as his namesake could steal it. He was a dealer in oxen, and like many others had borrowed money from my father in order to make his purchases in distant markets.

Now father was certainly a good collector, but, whenever he approached Nutka, the latter so completely bombarded him with excuses, promises, and protestations that father, for once, was stumped. Nutka would wring his hands, smile, wheedle, and writhe like an eel, but somehow would keep himself between the creditor and his money. Having so many other debts and transactions on his mind, father gave up Nutka as a bad job and turned him over to me. At first I went directly to his house and was met with the most effusive welcome; he

was honored to see me and ashamed of his poor hospitality and how were all my folks and my studies? I must be practically a rabbi, now, and know the Talmud by heart. I remember the visit hazily, but the first clear recollection is of walking home in quite a glow from his compliments and appreciation of my merits and carrying in my hand a piece of cake which his wife had baked with the art and care that all good Jewish women put into their elaborate cooking. Needless to remark, I had had no opportunity to mention the object of my call.

After I had asked him several times for the money and had always been put off, I decided upon different tactics. Nutka, in the course of his affairs, was obliged to travel on week-days almost constantly, sometimes going as far as Warsaw and other large cities. Our only chance of collecting was in the short intervals he spent in Kashoffka. There were numerous other merchants traveling in the district at that time, and several of them would come into our town to spend the Sabbath. On Saturday afternoon they would congregate in the sanded circle near the Krechma to talk things over. Nutka, of course, was anxious to impress those outside merchants favorably because he wanted to do business with them. I chose a moment when he was in conference with these traders to dun him once more. By that time I had been on his trail so consistently that he knew what to expect when he saw me coming, and his face showed great embarrassment.

I called him to one side and told him that, unless he paid me, I should demand the money in the presence of all the strangers. Nutka was in agony, and I was none too sure of my ground because it was forbidden to handle money on the Sabbath, and I knew Nutka could not have any in his possession. If he had offered it, I should have

been obliged to refuse. But I bound him by an oath no man would dare to break that if he did not keep his word he should not live to see his children grow up and he swore to have the money ready for me that evening at his house. I got the money, for, not content with having his oath, I further warned him that unless he paid me I should denounce him while the merchants were having tea around his samovar that evening, and it was on Saturday evening, around the samovar, that many of the biggest deals were consummated.

May Nutka Ganiff, merchant of Kashoffka, be roaming the streets of gold, where neither creditors threaten nor deals go wrong, for Nutka was sent abruptly to his fathers with bullets through his heart. Four men were told to shoot him and they did as they were told. The officer who ordered his execution had been told that Nutka was a spy. One can easily imagine Nutka's disappointment at the tremendous interference of war with business and can understand that all the promptings of his nature would drive him to roam from town to town, trying to trade a little here and there. One can understand he might have been lax about passports, in his eagerness to perpetuate the sinews of peace activities, and that even shell-fire, after he had grown accustomed to it, might not always have deterred him. For this, he was misprized by army officers. They had not known him nor traded with him. Their profession, while it called for equal ardor, required rather less of human understanding. And so they mistook a trader for a spy and shot him. I suppose they made the same error hundreds of times, and one cannot blame them too severely. They had to have spies and shoot them. But I wish they had known, in the case of Nutka Ganiff, what a talented man they

had slain. I wish they had regretted afterward that they had not used his gifts to better purpose. And I sincerely wish, if all my old neighbors and friends who were executed as spies were pouring information into the secret vaults of some great capital, that the records will some day be made public so that we all may wonder at the curious assortment of facts which they must have accumulated.

The ox merchants bought their stock from peasants scattered over the outlying farms, and when they had collected a herd, drove them to the nearest railroad point for shipment to Warsaw, which was one of the biggest cattle markets of Europe, to Lodz, now a city of Poland, or across the border into Germany. It was an imposing sight to see a great herd of beasts marching across the Grabley and stringing out along the road beyond the river, with cattle-men and dogs running and yelling around to keep the herd in order. The merchants traveled with their stock and were, therefore, respected by the villagers, for they dressed well, had acquired more manners, and knew the world beyond our forests. Knowing how they were esteemed, they would put on airs of importance as they told of their adventures to a ready group of listeners in the synagogue. Because father had traveled so much farther than the ox merchants, they were a trifle jealous of him and felt that he threatened their prestige. However, they frequently borrowed money from father for their trading and always complained of being poor when they returned from a business trip. One of the outstanding among them was Yankel, who was tall and dignified, with a beard touched slightly with gray. He came from a family somewhat educated. Yankel was by far the worst payer in Kashoffka. He would return

from Warsaw with a rich fund of anecdotes, and he always had a keen sense of humor, but never any money. I also learned about collecting from him.

Business did not take up all of my time at that period, for I was given charge of our samovar, and whenever the family or guests congregated in our living-rooms I prepared the tea, although usually that work is delegated to a servant. The samovar, of course, played an important part in every home in Russia. No matter how poor a man was, he managed to get a samovar, even though it was dented, leaky, and old. In the city as well as in the country, it had a deep significance, as it was placed in the center of the table and every one gathered around. It was not uncommon for one man or woman to drink twenty glasses of tea and lemon. Business deals were concluded on such occasions, betrothals were arranged, affairs of the world discussed, personal and family troubles aired.

To prepare a samovar it is necessary to put in charcoal and paper, but first it has to be polished until not a speck of dirt or tarnished metal can be found. The water must reach a certain degree of heat and the tea must not remain on the fire a moment too long. We had several samovars and by father's express wish I attended to them all. The number of guests and importance of the occasion determined the style of samovar to be used. I soon learned the peculiarities of each one. Some had to be blown from underneath in order to get the best fire; others had to be kindled with a chip of wood. But my prize discovery was that if I put a Russian boot in the neck of the samovar and pushed it up and down, thus creating a vacuum, for the folds of the Russian boots were soft and pliable and lent themselves to such motion, the samovar would rattle.

Then it would shiver, and steam would come from the little opening. If the samovar is allowed to heat too long, the water will begin to run over. The trick is to stop it just before that point is reached. In that way the beautiful surface of silver, copper, or brass is not tarnished.

I think mostly of the samovar in connection with winter, the warmth, the aroma of tea, the elongated reflections in its polished sides. I should like to look into one of our old samovars as into a crystal and see the faces of men and women, long departed, some of them forgotten, come slowly forward to be recognized. Perhaps, if one gazed there long enough, that land, now vanished, would slowly come into being once more. Perhaps old friends, old scenes, old inspirations would help me rescue Kashoffka from oblivion.

I wonder if the snow falls there as it did in the days of my childhood. I wonder if the same frost patterns would be formed, in case there were windows to catch them. It is possible that even the climate has changed, that the winds which blew in the storms have passed on beyond the limits of this planet.

We used to wait for the time to come when the river would be bound with ice. That first winter, when our establishment became an important center of the cold-weather activities, I grew to know our neighbors and our customers more intimately. Still there was time for play. If there had been skates in the village, the skating would have been magnificent, but I saw only one pair and they were possessed by the son of Ilchichky, father's enemy and the friend of the Rotnik. The rest of us slid on the smooth surfaces and enjoyed the sport. The holes dug in the ice by the fishermen might have proved dangerous if too many boys had taken to skating.

With the approach of cold weather, the windows of Kashoffka were nailed down tight. There were no fresh-air enthusiasts in town. The well-to-do people had double windows to protect them from drafts and storms and between the two sets of windows was a space from six inches to a foot deep. This space was filled with all sorts of vegetables, fruits, cranberries, or candles, and the cool air would preserve the fruits. Often there would be glasses of jelly or preserves through which the light shone as it does through a stained-glass window, leaving colored reflections on the floor and the scanty furniture. The frost pictures were intricate and elaborate, scrolls and flourishes, forms of clouds and animals, mountains, ravines, and waterfalls. Such displays made it easier to believe in the existence of spirits.

In the synagogues the men huddled near the warm brick wall called the 'ribbi' while the sexton threw wood upon the fire. The women would be busy in their homes, spinning, weaving, embroidering, and gossiping. The 'soldiers of Nicholas' would tell and retell their experiences. Snow fell almost continually, one layer descending upon another, drifting before the wind, settling into corners. On cold days the snow was crisp. At noon, under the rays of the sun it softened a little. Sleigh bells sounded over the plains. Oxen plodded to and from the woods to haul the loads of firewood. The peasants, in fur caps and crude boots and leggings which had been decorated with gayly colored twine, went about their work when the weather permitted, and slept for days and nights on end when Koshoffka was swept by a storm. One of the picturesque customs among the peasants was to hide the image of Christ or of the Virgin in the snow and then to conduct a merry search for it, men and women, boys

and girls, laughing and singing and dressed in bright colors which were set off by the whiteness of the snow and the green of the fir trees. After the image was found, it would sometimes be dipped through a hole in the ice and the peasants would scoop up the water thus sanctified and take it home in dishes and kettles to keep the devils away. Wolves lurked in the woods, and as men returned to the village at dusk, they often would see green and yellow eyes in pairs following them from the shadows of the pines. Trappers caught beaver, mink, otter, and all kinds of fur-bearing animals, tending their long lines of traps by means of crude snowshoes. No one was without a fur cap and a fur coat, but all of them were home-made, and although comfortable would not be considered stylish on a city street.

Darkness fell quite early in the afternoon, and in the evenings, while the old folks sewed, sang, and told stories, young men would call from house to house, whistling, singing, dancing, and playing home-made flutes called 'dootkies.' These instruments were like shepherds' pipes, with only four or five notes, but the tone was smooth and haunting, and some of the peasants were very skillful in making music upon them.

Our oil press was used most extensively in winter and the warmth of the stove over which the linseed were boiled kept the peasants lingering by its side longer than was absolutely necessary. Not only those who had business with us, but others who were idle or lonesome, came to our house or gathered just outside in the sheds or the street. Todor the drunkard, whose long sessions at the Government dispensary of vodka I have told about, worked quite steadily for us that first winter. I had never seen him work before, but he proved to be quite energetic,

and he was always happy when his vitals were warmed with vodka. To him the various degrees of human joy and happiness corresponded with the labels on the bottles. The best grade, indicated by a red label, was the acme of enjoyment. The poorest grade he was glad to get when nothing else was available.

There were few men with better natures than Todor. And he had a quick wit, too. He wove the ropes with which belts were made to run our machines and was always assisted by a helper who did not drink. As Todor's fingers skillfully twisted the hemp, his twinkling eyes would rove from corner to corner, and whoever came into sight would be the object of his jokes. Years of communion with alcohol had burnished his nose a deep, rich red on which the purple veins were faintly visible.

Charton the bully, having dropped the idea of frightening father, came around occasionally and continued his depredations in other sections of the town. At that time the son of the nobleman who lived across the river returned from college, and the young man, bored by the solitude of his father's estate, would often come to the village and to our house in search of company. He mingled freely with the Jewish population, especially in those houses where beautiful girls lived, but he was thin and frail and not gifted with a physique which was likely to win him the favors of those who admired strength. One day when Charton was a little drunk and was showing off his strength by threatening and fighting the other men, who were afraid of him, the nobleman's son, to everybody's astonishment, threw him on his back as easily as if he had been a kitten. The boy had learned at college a form of Japanese wrestling known as jiu-jitsu, which was then unfamiliar to Russians, and by a simple

trick of twisting a muscle or throwing his opponent off his balance and using the man's own weight against him the nobleman's son could overcome the strongest of the peasants. After that, whenever a fight started, the boy would tackle the victor or the aggressor and make him ashamed of himself. As long as he was in town, the chronic fighters kept more quiet and the girls reversed their original opinion of him and made him quite a hero. Whatever other effect he had upon Kashoffka, he certainly raised in the minds of the peasants their appreciation of the value of education.

One of the fights I remember most vividly involved a man called Stanislav, who came to the little village of Oley, just a short distance from Kashoffka, where the Government distillery was situated. Stanislav, for a while, was superintendent of the distillery, but he lost his job somehow and drifted into Kashoffka, where he remained for some time. He was a man of good breeding and considerable education, and, like most cultivated men who found themselves marooned in isolated towns, he found solace in drinking for the lack of intellectual stimulus and congenial companionship. He was a tremendous man, a real giant, and was afraid of no one. Ilchichky's lovely daughters attracted all the better class of men to his house, and, still harboring resentment against my father for his victories and achievements, Ilchichky cultivated the friendship of Stanislav, hoping to be able to use him against us.

A short distance from the village, in a clearing hidden by the forest and from which the trees had been chopped and the stumps dug up with the greatest difficulty, was a small settlement of Poles, very poor, having to toil from dawn until dark for a mere existence, yet quite cheerful

and intensely patriotic. The Russian Government had permitted them to settle there, or perhaps had merely failed to take official notice of their presence. They came to work on the farms surrounding Kashoffka, made baskets, told fortunes, gathered herbs — in fact, did anything at all which would keep them from starvation. Now and then they would get together enough money to buy a little vodka, and, to a group of Poles, vodka means fighting. One day four of the Poles, one of them a man eighty years old, but taller and more tremendous than Stanislav himself, got into a fight. It was a sort of free-for-all, with no object except to release a certain exuberance the men possessed. Nobody knew how it started or what it was about. The place they had chosen haphazardly for their scuffle was in front of a small shop next door to Ilchichky's, where a man named Yokel sold dry goods.

The most picturesque figure was that of the old man, whose powerful head towered above those of his opponents and whose deep bass voice drowned out the shouts of his less conspicuous compatriots. Whenever he lost his temper, this old man would bellow, like a war-cry, 'Poland is not lost.' Among the spectators was Stanislav, who had been drinking with Ilchichky and chatting and dancing with the daughters. He could not keep out of trouble very long, so he decided to break up the fight. The Poles, who had been fighting one another, evidently had considered it a national quarrel and resented the interference of a foreigner, so all four of them turned on Stanislav, who fought all of them, roaring, swinging his heavy fists, and kicking in all directions with his boots. There were no rules about fighting in those days. The venerable Pole, after a few moments, was seen

to leave the scuffle and make his way out behind the shop. There he pulled up a large fence post, six inches or more in diameter, brought it back, and swinging it high in the air with both hands brought it down on the top of Stanislav's head. The fence post actually broke, and Stanislav went down to his knees. In a moment, however, he got up, shook himself in a dazed way, and said: 'We will call it a day.'

Nearly any one else would have been killed by such a blow.

Stanislav fell under the influence of Ilchichky, as the latter had hoped, and later helped defraud father of some of his possessions he was not able to own outright because of the law against the Jews. The law then in force regarding the ownership of land had been passed during the reign of Alexander III in 1882, eight years before I was born. The restrictions were contained in a set of 'Temporary Rules' laid down at that time, but which remained in full force under Alexander III and Nicholas II. First it was forbidden for a Jew to settle outside the limits of towns and villages, and, since the village houses were all clustered in the center, this cut off the Jews from the fertile farmlands and the pastures on the slopes outlying. The second rule made it illegal for Jews to purchase land or 'merchandise' outside the town limits, which prevented them from doing business in real estate. The third rule forbade Jews to do business on Sundays or Christian holidays. It was not uncommon for the men who allowed their names to be used for the purchase of land to double-cross those who had trusted them, and father was often the victim of that sort of trick. He had to resort to all kinds of subterfuges and expedients, but he was so clever in court that always he got the best of those who tried to defraud him. Stanislav was no exception.

Stanislav is now in Boston. A short time ago one of my former playmates, from Kashoffka, now a plumber and gas-fitter, came to see me at my office and told me that Stanislav had been a tenant in his house in the West End for three years, and only the day before they had got into conversation about the old country and had found that his tenant was the once famous Stanislav. Stanislav earns a living as a carpenter here and is to-day nearly as old as the Pole was when he felled him with a fence post. The plumber, who in the old days we called Itze, was one of the few boys with whom I used to like to play. He is slightly older than I, and used to be a wonderful climber. He could almost go up the sheer side of a wall. He was also a good fighter and handy with a jackknife. In order to get to the water mill across the river from where we lived, it was necessary to walk over a narrow tree-trunk which was placed horizontally, like a bridge, over the deep water. Itze was able to keep his balance and used to cross first and make a safer bridge of planks from the other side for us to use. One of our pastimes was to hunt for bats beneath the bridges. When we caught one, we would nail it to the side of the house, for it was the local belief that a bat brought luck to a household.

Itze's father, called Yankive Bear, a brother of Yankel the cattle-dealer, had owed us some money when I was quite small, and my sister Bessie, having seen Itze go to the river for water with several copper kettles, walked out and took them away. This was not an uncommon way to enforce the payment of debts in Kashoffka and the whole family, to which Yankel and Yankive belonged, were notoriously bad payers.

I had some feeling that mother would not approve of that method of collecting, and once, when I was five or

six years old and had been sent to get some money out of Idey Leib Fishbein, I found the house empty and the large wooden chest in which valuables were kept standing open. There were several silver wine-cups in sight and I was tempted to take them. If there had been any one at home, I should have snatched what I could get and run. When I returned home and told what had happened, there was some discussion as to whether I had done right. Father was inclined to believe I would have been justified in taking the wine-cups, but mother took my side of the question.

Among the men with whom I got acquainted at our place were two brothers called 'Short Friday' and 'Long Saturday.' They are both in this country now. 'Long Saturday' was born on a certain Jewish holiday which falls on that day of the week and because of its importance is called 'Big' Saturday. This man was tall and exceedingly thin, and his brother, who was born on Short Friday, was short and stubby. The brothers were easily angered by these nicknames and would chase the children when the latter shouted at them.

'Short Friday' and 'Long Saturday' both left Kashoffka for America. They settled, I believe, in Pittsburgh. Short Friday's wife, a handsome woman, remained in Kashoffka. Each Sabbath, a number of wanderers and beggars would come to town, and, of course, were entertained by the pious Jews in their houses. On one occasion, a father and son, the latter of whom was very good-looking, arrived just before sundown on the Sabbath and were taken into the house where Short Friday's wife was living. The young man, attracted by her looks, made inquiries about her, and apparently admired her very much. As a matter of fact, I am quite sure that she found

him rather pleasant also. Not knowing that she was married, he began a strenuous courtship, and the others, always ready to play a joke on some one, let him believe that she was single. When he found the trick that had been played on him, he determined to revenge himself. Under the laws of Moses, if, in the presence of a certain number of witnesses, a man places a coin in a woman's hand, and she accepts it as he utters the proper prayer, they become man and wife. Pretending that he was joking, he performed this ceremony, and afterward insisted that she was his lawful wife. He was really a learned man, although a beggar, and expounded his case so well that the elders were thrown into consternation, and actually, after a solemn conclave, decided that the young man was right. The matter was finally settled by taking up a collection among the friends and relatives of Short Friday and persuading the young beggar to divorce her for a consideration.

An old couple who made a living by selling castor oil were considered queer by their neighbors and seemed to have few friends. The principal reason for their isolation was the fact that the woman, whose name was Libby, could read. Very few of the girls or women were taught to read, and when they were the language taught them was Yiddish, not Hebrew, as was the case with the boys. Libby used to sit in her window, in plain sight of every one, and read books, and what should a woman be doing with books? There was an old saying among the townspeople that if any one reads, he will start thinking, and if he starts thinking, he will go crazy. So reading was avoided as much as possible. Libby's husband was named Meyer, also addicted to literature, but they seemed to have a monopoly on the castor-oil trade, and since there

were no physicians and castor oil was one of the most popular remedies for all sorts of ills, Meyer and Libby did not starve. They kept their house neatly. It was situated next to that of Schloime Boorich, one of the shoemakers. Meyer had a very fine mare and added to his income by breeding colts and selling them. Nearly every one in Kashoffka had two or three occupations, at least. One day the wolves caught one of Meyer's colts and killed it, at the same time injuring the mare. This was thought to be a judgment on Meyer for his unusual actions, and while the townspeople felt badly for the colt, they had little sympathy for the man.

That same day I was sent by my parents to Meyer's house to buy some castor oil. He was not at home, but his wife was there. They kept the oil in a big glass jug with a wicker covering, and, since the oil was low and Libby was not very strong, I tried to help her lift the jug in order to pour out the oil I wanted. Somehow the jug slipped between us and all the oil was spilled. This was a severe loss, not only because of the value of the oil, but owing to the fact that it was necessary to send such a long distance to get any more. Meanwhile the town would be without its most necessary remedy. I insisted that the accident was her fault because she was unstrung by the disaster to the colt. She claimed that I was to blame. The result was that she kept the whole rouble I had brought with me. To get even with her, I found Puzzia, the boy with a penchant for breaking windows, and for weeks after that each day I persuaded him to break Libby's windows. Poor Reba, Puzzia's grandmother, had to pay, but I felt that the inconvenience to Libby compensated me for the rouble and the injustice of her accusations.

Later I learned more about Libby's family and the scandals connected with it. The worst was that one of her grandchildren had married outside the faith and was living with a Russian lieutenant in Roshist. When a Jewish young man or woman broke their racial and religious ties in that fashion, it was the custom to mourn them as dead. It was really considered worse than death, except by the young man or woman. Libby's other grandchild, who was small, vivacious, and very beautiful, with dazzling red hair, became a dancer. She left Kashoffka to go on the stage, another frightful disgrace to her parents, and to-day, I am informed, is a well-known American 'star.'

How the former inhabitants of Kashoffka are dispersed, and what divers paths they have taken! This lovely girl I have just mentioned has been the object of admiring eyes in every large city of America and probably in Europe as well. One of my countrymen has made a conspicuous record as a champion prize-fighter. Others of my townsmen are merchants, lawyers, rag peddlers, plumbers, editors, and engineers; nearly all of them have children in the foremost American colleges. A few have remained poor, but most of them have done rather well and are respected in their several communities.

One of the men now in Boston is the son of one of the brothers who was called upon to do so much fighting and precipitated the row about Feivish in the synagogue. As a boy, this man was called 'Pulanko,' from a kind of bread made by Russian peasants. The bread is flat and does not rise in the usual way, and in comparison to an ordinary loaf looks undersized, an ugly duckling among breads. 'Pulanko' the boy was short and shaped in a way to suggest one of those loaves. He was a year or two

younger than I, but I liked him on account of his pleasant disposition and got mother's permission to play with him. The first time I went to his house, his mother was grinding salt with a brass implement which is banged down upon the table. Every one used to grind his own salt and make his own butter and cheese. On that day Pulanko's mother was grinding a lot of salt to be used in pickling cabbage, and one of the boys grabbed a handful and put it in his mouth. In order not to be outdone, I put two handfuls in my mouth, and the salt made me so sick that mother refused to let me play with those boys any more. Pulanko, now a grown man, has retained the sweetness of his nature and has done well in America. He is a florist, a trade which has always seemed to be one of the most pleasant ones, since it enables one to live and work in an atmosphere of rare perfumes, rich colors, and exquisite shapes. In selling flowers, even for a sad occasion, one may be sure that his goods will lighten the hearts of those who purchase them.

I think, with the exception of one man, the people who came to America from Kashoffka have been successful. The exception is a man who made the trip at the same time I did and caused us all a great deal of trouble by his erroneous interpretations of English, which he pretended to know because he had been here before. The younger generation, whose parents were residents of Kashoffka, are now physicians, surgeons, dentists, or engineers, and are a part and parcel of American life. How different their bringing up from that of their parents! Several of the parents are in the fur business in Montreal. The merchants have places of business in Philadelphia, Providence, Boston, Pittsburgh, Syracuse, and New York, in all lines from rubber to cloaks, suits, and sweaters.

One of the cloak and suit men in New York was, in the old country, nicknamed 'Zibely Pach.' 'Zibely' means seven, and in his case signified that he was a seven-months child. 'Pach' means bald, and was applied to him because he grew up with little or no hair on his head. His scalp was covered with sores, an affliction quite common in our village. People thus afflicted used to wear their caps down over their ears all the time and the caps were likely to be stained and to have an unpleasant smell. Zibely was the son of a tailor, but even among the tailors there were certain castes and Zibely's father belonged to the lowest, the itinerant tailor who worked mostly sewing sheepskins together. His mother was the town midwife, and delivered nearly all the children born in Kashoffka. She must have been quite skillful, for I do not remember that she ever lost a child. She was tall and thin, with long bony hands. Her only rival was Rabbi Welfl's wife, but Zibely's mother offered her services free of charge and soon put the other out of business. The midwife had one idea which undoubtedly worked havoc with the physiques of many of the babies, for she taught the mothers to bandage infants tightly from head to foot, saying that this would make them grow tall and straight. The bandages were supposed to be especially effective in preventing children from growing bow-legged. The mothers took the midwife's word, and the stronger they were, the tighter were the bandages drawn. There is no telling what the consequences were.

Usually the children of tailors were not encouraged to associate with boys whose parents were in better circumstances, but Zibely and his brother made their way better than most poor boys because they were courageous and very amiable. One of the most painful confessions I

have to make is that once in a fight with Zibely I purposely pulled off his cap to embarrass him before the bystanders. I repented the act instantly, and did what I could after that to show my good will to him, but from time to time as years go by I remember that moment with shame and wish I could remove it completely from my memory. The father was a good and pious man and both his sons have made their way successfully, for which I am glad.

Another traveling tailor who lived in our town had two sons who journeyed with him, helping him in his daily work. This tailor had a daughter who, in a town where handsome girls were plentiful, was conspicuous among them. She reached the age of twenty, however, without having an offer of marriage, for her father's calling was the least enviable one and he had not a cent to offer as a dowry. To be an old maid was the worst that could happen to a Jewish girl; except in those days to run away with a Goy was more terrible, since it might bring misfortune and the wrath of God on the whole family. Every one in Kashoffka sympathized with this lovely girl. Once, during the high holidays, some soldiers of the Jewish faith who had been maneuvering near the village came to town on leave to celebrate. One of the means of celebration for soldiers of any army, and particularly those of the Russian army, is sleeping in the daytime. Russian soldiers have no beds from the time they enter the service until they are discharged, so this soldier stretched himself out on the floor of the tailor's house to take a nap. He slept with his mouth open and the cat, in chasing a mouse across the room, frightened the little creature to the extent that it took refuge in the soldier's mouth, and was swallowed. The girl, who had been watching her lover sleep, let out

a shriek. The whole neighborhood was aroused, including the znacher. On the advice of the wise men, the soldier was strung up by the heels from a ceiling beam and a morsel of cheese was placed near his mouth. The women went to the synagogue to pray. According to witnesses, the mouse, tempted by the cheese or impelled by the prayers, crept out and ran away. At any rate, the soldier suffered no evil consequences.

Of all the holidays the Passover had the most elaborate preparation and Morris the bathman, genial and white-bearded, labored harder than any slave of the Pharaohs. In our house the spring cleaning was begun three or four weeks before the holiday. It was the same in the other Jewish homes. Every piece of furniture was scrubbed. Chairs and tables would be piled high around the bath-house, where Morris and his helpers would wash them, scour them, and leave them in the sun to dry. The floors were cleaned, every crack and crevice, until a magnifying-glass would not have revealed a speck of dust. All our clothes had to be renovated and cleansed, and when the time came not one of our garments showed the slightest signs of dirt. The girls looked lovelier than ever, in their new clothes, and although they were not supposed to show themselves any more than was absolutely necessary, the most enterprising of them often passed within sight of the young men who were grouped here and there.

After the long winter and the damp, unhealthy season which accompanied the thaw, the spring sunshine and the smell of buds in the air gave life to the toiling women, and every one was glad for a chance to go freely out-of-doors once more. New dishes were bought, the houses were as busy as a market-place.

According to the religious law, bread which contained

yeast and any of the ingredients of such bread, including flour and corn, must be removed from the houses for Passover. Only unleavened crackers or matzos were allowed. The Chassidim carried this taboo to amazing extremes. Just a single grain of flour clinging to a man's coat-sleeve would render him unfit for the occasion. The Chassidim removed all bread, crumbs, flour, and other forbidden things from their premises as carefully as they could, and then, on the night before Passover, to show that their intentions had been good even if they had overlooked a crumb somewhere, they would scatter crumbs around the floor and on the following morning would go over the entire floor space with a feather, sweeping the crumbs into a wooden spoon which was burned in a huge bonfire in the center of town.

In cases where pious men owned large quantities of oats, wheat, or corn, and feared that although the grain was not in the house the mere possession of it would be held against them, they would sell it to a Goy with the understanding that it was to be resold to them as soon as the holiday was over. Certain of the peasants in the village were known to be upright and fair and these were trusted by the Jews in transactions like the aforementioned. A small fee was usually paid the peasant, and in some communities the favored peasants were able to make a living in that way, just by owning forbidden commodities a few days in the springtime. The tailors and shoemakers had a regular harvest. In the large families fairly well-to-do a tailor would be engaged by the week or month at that time of year and would move into the house and sit cross-legged for hours sewing on the new garments. The shoemakers also were flooded with orders. So when the new buds were appearing on the trees, the

fields were turning green again, the air was clean and balmy and the birds were returning, all the inhabitants of our section of Kashoffka would have new clothes, dishes, furniture, everything. The inhabitants helped each other make matzos. On the day before, Morris would go through the streets shouting, 'Come to the bath,' and the men would steam themselves thoroughly before they put on their holiday attire.

The story of the deliverance from Egypt would be told by the old men to all the children, with such embellishments as the imagination of the elders could devise. For four hundred years, we were told, our people were in slavery, digging, baking bricks, building pyramids, while slave-drivers cracked their black-snake whips over the backs of our toiling forefathers and their women. It was related that the Pharaohs took their baths in the blood of little children. Moses, it was explained, not only led his followers from the accursed land and into the Promised Country where milk and honey were in abundance, but aroused in the ancient Hebrews a sense of solidarity, of nationality, which no amount of subsequent hardships had been able to dissolve. The grandfathers would grow eloquent, the grandchildren awestruck.

The heads of the household wore on Passover Eve a special white gown, and sat at the head of the table upon a chair which had been bolstered up with pillows. On this occasion, the father takes the place of the old high priests of a clan or tribe. His wife sits beside him, as did the queens of old, immaculately dressed, and men, women, and children and relatives of all gathered around. A specially prepared wine is served. Matzos (loaves of unleavened bread) are eaten, prayers are chanted, Psalms are sung. Each person at the table has his own

separate glass of wine, but there is always an extra one set for the Prophet Elijah, who is believed to enter the households at a certain moment in the ceremony, during which the door is left wide open. The children — and the elders, too, for that matter — watch the wine-glass which belongs to Elijah breathlessly, to see if the invisible Prophet actually sips the wine, and the imagination works wonders in such cases, for it is seldom that some one is not convinced that the level of the wine in the glass has changed. The poorer the household, and the more in need the family, the longer Elijah is believed to remain with them on Passover Eve. The head of the household always breaks a matzos in halves, distributing one half, and hiding the other beneath his pillow to be saved for the coming year. This is believed to give good luck throughout the year.

In one case I remember in Kashoffka, a spirited girl, who wanted to marry a young man her parents did not favor, stole the half of matzos from under her father's chair and refused to give it up, no matter what was done to her, until they had consented to the marriage she wished. The old folks, in terror lest the household should be visited by terrible misfortune if the matzos was not returned, gave in, and the girl, let us say, lived happily ever afterward.

Another case in which the lucky half of a matzos played a part was one in which a number of heirs were disputing about the division of property. One of them stole the matzos and held it in order to obtain what he considered his share.

Kashoffka was quite as busy on the eve of Yom Kippur, the day of atonement. Many of the towns had no synagogues and the Jews from these villages would come to

Kashoffka with their families to celebrate the high holidays. Room would be found for them somewhere. Yom Kippur for me always meant a fight, for one of the out-of-town boys called Cross-Eyed David had a grudge against me. Once, when I was quite small, he had brought his horse into our lot to feed, and when I objected he and his brother beat me up. I hired a peasant to take the horse away and would not give it up until the grass the horse had eaten and the damage it had done had been paid for. After that each year we met and had it out. My mother heard about it and told me not to fight him, but I could not help it, since he would seek me out and attack me. All the boys knew what would happen and were on hand to watch. David had a grandfather called Sheppa, also cross-eyed. He was a very pious old man who prayed incessantly and thought of nothing but his fate in the world to come.

The sexton of the synagogue had a rod with four leather thongs, and it was the custom on Yom Kippur, as a man entered the synagogue, for the sexton to strike him once or twice across the back as he knelt in order that such punishment and humiliation might lighten his burden of sin and make it easier for him to ask and obtain forgiveness. Actually, according to ritual, each man should receive thirty-nine lashes, but in our village, in order to spare the sexton's strength and the backs of the pious, one or two blows was deemed sufficient. Not so with Sheppa, however. When he prayed, he prayed longer than any one else, and on fast days he fasted longer and more completely. When it came time to kiss the scrolls, he kissed them a dozen times for good measure. In reciting prayers, he shouted the loudest. So upon entering the synagogue on Yom Kippur, Sheppa insisted

THE THIRTY-NINE LASHES

upon receiving a real, protracted beating, and he got it.

The question of pasturage often led to complications worse than those which sprang up between Cross-Eyed David and me. The village shepherds and the men and women who tended cattle or horses would often drive their animals onto land to which they had no right. The nobleman suffered considerably on this account, and more than once, when he caught some one stealing pasturage, would sling a rope around the offender, twist it over his saddle horn or around his horse's tail and drag the thief along the ground. The little that the poor people stole from the landowners, the latter more than made up by exploiting the peasants and the poor Jews. For the right to pick blueberries, each member of a family would have to perform several days of labor for the landlord. In order to obtain bark with which to make shoes, the peasants would have to work days and days for the rich men.

Among the poor, hospitality was incomparable. The place of honor for sleeping accommodations was on top of the brick stove, notwithstanding the fact that the fumes would give one a terrific headache. The warmth was supposed to counterbalance the headache. A stranger was always given the place above the stove and was seated at the head of the table. Any host would have been insulted if his guest had offered to pay. Many travelers were obliged to stay over in Kashoffka on account of the Sabbath. There were many wandering beggars, as I have said, and many young students on religious pilgrimages. The beggars were ragged and underfed and looked as poor as they were. They would enter the synagogue and wait there for an invitation into some one's home. They never had to wait long. It was almost an unwritten law that they should be taken into our house, but, if there were

several of them, others opened their homes as well. The beggars were always received graciously by my mother, who often gave them clothes, food and shelter. In return they would tell stories, and nothing would drive me to bed so long as a stranger was relating tales of ghosts, devils, murders, hold-ups, or miracles. Now and then a wanderer would tell what had brought him to such a condition and we listened most eagerly to these confessions. Some had lost their riches through misfortune or trickery; others were driven upon the highroad by the haunting memory of a sin they had committed and for which they did penance by miles of penniless wandering.

Of course, there were many orphans. When a boy or girl was left without parents or relatives, the families most comfortably situated would take turns in caring for him or her. On Monday, the orphan would take his meals in one house, on Tuesday in another, and in return would perform simple tasks for the housewife. As they came of age, the orphans of Kashoffka usually went to some city, for there was little opportunity for them to make a place for themselves in our town. The orphans were among the few to benefit in time of plague or general disaster, for it was believed that by marrying its orphans at its own expense a community could appease the Divine wrath and avert catastrophe. It was impressed upon orphans, however, from their earliest years that they were very unfortunate and they grew up with sad faces and with a sigh always ready to be exhaled. I was always much depressed by them.

One of the gayest of our celebrations took place each month in honor of the full moon and on those occasions the girls would wear wreaths of vines or flowers on their

heads and every one would sing and dance in a circle. It is probably due to the fact that so many of the people of antiquity used the wreath as a symbol that certain of the rites of the Russian peasants resembled ours in this respect. The Russian religious holidays were also picturesque and their processions, dances, and festivals linger in my memory.

There was a shrine at Pochive, near Warsaw, which was a favorite object for pilgrimage among the peasants of our village and the surrounding towns. Hundreds of peasants, mostly those who were crippled, old, and feeble, would congregate each spring and set out upon a journey which took from two to three months to accomplish. They were too poor to get there except on foot. The pilgrims had no shoes, but wore sandals of bark or wrapped their feet in white rags, which at the outset were neat and clean, but soon became discolored and caked with mud and dust. The sandals were decorated with colored twine which they wound around the calves of their legs, and which held in place the rags intended to keep their feet from blistering. On their backs the pilgrims would carry packs in which were several loaves of black bread and some bacon. Their outer garments were mostly of sheepskin, very white, and were embroidered painstakingly with intricate patterns. Some wore homespun woolen clothing. Most of the old men and women wore ragged clothes on the way and carried their best clothes to put on at the shrine in honor of the saint.

Usually they would gather in front of the tavern, and their faces, torn between hope and anxiety, made a deep impression upon me. Afterward, as I traveled through Russia I saw dozens and hundreds of crosses by the roadside where pilgrims for whom the journey was too hard

had died and had been buried by their companions. Usually these wayside graves were situated at crossroads and the crosses which marked them were often carefully carved. There were young men and women among the pilgrims, but these were nearly all cripples who hoped to be cured by the mystic power of the saint. Some carried crippled children upon their backs. So they would march for hundreds of miles along the sandy and muddy roads, pathetic and earnest companies urged on by their belief in the efficacy of prayer. Very often the old folks would go to Pochive to pray that a daughter who had passed what was considered the marriageable age might find a husband, preferably a husband who had some land, for land was very scarce, and according to the Russian law had to be divided among the male children of each generation until the strips were so narrow that there was hardly room to turn a plow.

I can hear to-day the solemn chants and songs by which the pilgrims cheered one another on their way. When news was received in the village that a band was returning, the church bells would be rung joyously and the wanderers, at the sight of home, would burst again into song.

Another occasion I have neglected to mention on which the Jewish people wore wreaths on their heads was the celebration which occurred in each family when the last child was married. The father and mother, if they were alive, had the honor of wearing the wreaths, but if both parents were dead, the nearest relative or the oldest sister was given that distinction.

Religion was a part of the daily life; the presence of God and of the Devil was as real to every one except the few skeptics as the presence of the visible inhabitants.

Nearly every act had some religious significance, and the slightest wish, as well as the most important and profound, was made the object of prayer. Each change of season had religious significance to Jew and Gentile; each storm, rainbow, drought, pestilence drove the pious to the church and to the synagogues. Every one worked and prayed, sang, danced, fought, told stories, interpreted one another's dreams. In the midst of so many intense influences and impressions I seemed to absorb them all eagerly. At the age of eight I was in the advanced class surrounded by boys much older, studying Hebrew and the Torah through long hours each day, rushing from school to the house, where I tried to absorb everything at once.

We had several horses then and I fed and watered them, riding them from place to place with no need for a saddle. One of the white horses of which I was particularly fond was held for trespassing, as was the custom where live stock caused damage by straying. I spent my spare hours searching the farmlands around the village until I found him. In that part of Russia the truck gardens were made in a peculiar way, with trenches two or three feet deep between the rows of vegetables. The peasants believed that the sun and rain nourished the roots more thoroughly if there was a space around the plants and that the extra growth more than made up for the area occupied by the ditches. I recognized our white horse in the middle of one of these gardens, but several men and women were working near him and I knew that if they saw me, they would not let me take the horse, so I crawled on my stomach in one of the ditches until I came alongside of the animal, untied his hobbles, and then jumped quickly on his back before the peasants noticed what was going on. I had got quite a start by the time

pursuit was under way and came riding furiously into the village, so fast that I could no longer have stopped the horse if I had wanted to. Not until I was in the town did I remember that the day was a holiday and all our neighbors watched me with horrified glances, turning away to avoid the sight of such a desecration of the law. Another scandal was afoot. Whatever I did was almost sure to stir up a commotion.

And so progressed the second period of my life and development. The first, so calm and undisturbed, had brought me an awareness of the subtle, harmonious rhythms of nature, the tints of the sky reflected in the river, the movements of clouds and of the mysterious surface of the water, the comradeship of birds and animals, the feeling that people were at peace with one another. All the colors, red and orange, yellow and green, blue and violet, had seemed wonderful to me. Bird song, chimes, the sighing of the wind, human voices, the swaying of the cornstalks like ghosts at prayer, all in turn had impressed themselves upon my consciousness. Mingled with all these were the love and solicitude of my mother and the genial influence of Feivish. My studies, simple as they were, did not seem like tasks to me, for I learned easily and was frequently praised. Strangers were kind to me because my mother had been kind to them, and I formed a sympathetic opinion of all the creatures which made up the world as then I saw it. The fact that my father was away, that to me he was only made up of song and story, made me turn to a single source for comfort and understanding, and that source never failed. I learned that it was pure and unfathomable. With two parents in the house, my attention and affection, as well as theirs, would necessarily have been divided. I have often wondered how much that initial taste of tranquillity and spiritual beauty has helped me in a life which, whatever else may be said about it, has never since been uneventful or calm. I cannot help but believe that in my first four years I laid up a reservoir of spiritual strength which was filled with my mother's character and has never been exhausted. It is a mistake, I am convinced, to generalize about childhood, to consider it a care-free and happy prelude to a life of trouble. Some childhoods are happy and beneficial; others are surely miserable and injurious. My own, in the very beginning, has always seemed to me idyllic, under conditions which others have termed squalid, unenlightened, and oppressive.

The first great change for me, as is already apparent, was the arrival of my father from America and the five years ensuing were filled with new interests, a broadening of my mind, and the sturdy growth of my body. But as I look back upon this phase of my life, it always has a dual character. The influence of my mother was quite as strong as before, but some of my new powers and a share of the wider scope of attention I was able to give to things around me was dominated by my father's restless and energetic personality. As I plunged deeper into the study of Hebrew tradition and law, I entered at the same time more thoroughly into what for Kashoffka, was a whirlwind of commercial and worldly activity. The two courses did not appear incongruous to me at the time, but on many occasions since — and I am still torn between them — they have seemed to be leading in opposite directions. I worked hard around our house, not because in the beginning I was driven to it, but from a real and active interest I took in all its development. I loved to

handle the beautiful gold and silver coins, to astonish the peasants with my arithmetic, to be sent on errands for which grown men were used ordinarily. When I was sent out for kindling wood, I purposely would load as much on my back as I could stagger along with, trying to prove to myself and to whoever might see me that I could do the work of a man. That same day, perhaps, in the Cheder I had applied myself with equal eagerness to a troublesome point of Hebrew law. The spirit of competition was tremendously strong in me as far back as I can remember. Mother tried to remove from it the taint of envy, but at the same time stressed the fact that she expected me to go far.

The men and women with whom I came in contact were of two distinct types, each one of which drew my mind in conflicting directions. Some of them, bowed down with sorrow, emaciated by poverty, in dread of further miseries in this world and apprehensive about the world to come, were the personifications of woe. Their moanings and wailings and whisperings affected my nerves, without a doubt. Volyhnia for centuries had been the scene of the direst struggles on the part of Jews and peasants alike. The parents and grandparents of our neighbors had lived in an atmosphere of dread and foreboding. It is not strange that this attitude toward life has been passed on, in a measure. While I was then unaware of the cause, I could not escape the effect. But in the next house to the most mournful man in town might be a neighbor with a twinkle in his eye, who would joke about eating his Monday morning breakfast on Wednesday afternoon, who, when the snowflakes were tumbling helter-skelter through the air, might call me aside, and pointing into the confused depths of the air tell me that

Mr. and Mrs. God were fighting and throwing pillows at one another. The snowflakes were the feathers which flew. If the stern voices chanting in the orthodox synagogue made me tremble at times, the wild dances and gestures of the Chassidim, laughing and shouting, counteracted my awe. For everything awful there was something comical. For every heap of dirt there was a corner of the woods filled with wild flowers. The poor were in want, but every one conceded that they had before them an eternity of peace, with the music of harps and the voices of seraphim in their ears, gold spread before them on the streets, great steaming slices of Leviathan served them by beautiful girl angels whose wings were white and whose hands were gentle. The rich, while there was a question as to what would happen to them when they died, rode spendid horses, laughed, drank, told others what to do. In summer I could roam out-of-doors, in winter there were more stories. Something good was always being cooked. I did not learn to make a choice, to prefer one thing over another, but to try to do everything that was to be done, to see each strange sight. Father brought me in touch with the favored men, mother with the most unfortunate.

Then another change occurred, revolutionizing completely my outlook on life and bringing my first overwhelming personal sorrow. Father's great activity and all the antagonism it aroused were stimulating to him. Excitement was as necessary as breathing to him. But the commotion attending the building of our house, the fights, lawsuits, feuds, and accusations, had the opposite effect upon my mother. She concealed this fact as best she could, for realizing that on account of her illness she had not been to father what she might have been if she

had had her health, she was most anxious not to discourage or handicap him in any way. With exquisite tact, she joined in his enthusiasms, big or little. When he secured some strange plant with bright-colored blossoms for the garden, she was the first to admire it. Each little improvement he made about the place she noticed and approved, for their love of the beautiful was the strongest trait they had in common. Her conception of what a wife should be was based on the firmest Jewish tradition. The husband was the head of the house. It was her duty to help and comfort him in every way.

It would be impossible to enumerate all the novelties father introduced in Kashoffka, ideas he had picked up in America or in the countries through which he had passed on his way to and from Boston. Nothing escaped his eye and no idea seemed too strange or difficult for him to carry out. He wanted not only to surpass his neighbors, but to surpass the models from which his ideas had sprung. When our new house was started, it was not intended that it should be one half as large as it turned out to be. The moment one room began to take shape, father would hit upon a plan for another. The sight of one kind of machinery would suggest some other kind. He associated ideas rapidly, whether they were utilitarian or decorative. His conception of perfection raced ahead faster than his accomplishment. He wanted trees to shade the yard and sent men after them. He sent squads and companies of peasants to scour the woods and fields for rare plants to be set out in the garden. If the plants wilted and died, he ordered others. Let any stranger passing through town tell of a beautiful bush he had seen in a distant city and father could not rest until he had obtained one like it.

The very opposition with which his plan was received

increased its importance in father's eyes. The importance of his enemies—and many of them were truly influential—was flattering to him. How could a man against whom two thirds of the educated men in the village had banded build himself a little cottage? No; he must have the most extensive grounds, the most attractive site, the largest house ever seen in Kashoffka! And what was a house without an orchard? He must have fruit trees. So in the midst of the hustle and bustle wagons were sent in all directions for young trees and the peasants who understood transplanting them were taken off their work upon the foundation or walls of the house and were told to tend the trees. How lovingly they tended them! They carried water from the river in pails as if the young trees had been colts. If the bark was bruised by a careless workman, old Sidder bandaged the wound with greater care than he would have used had he run a fishhook through his own hand. No matter how far away the richest loam was to be found, it was hauled to our yard and packed around the roots of the shrubs and the fledgling orchard. Trees suggested birds and hens led naturally on to peacocks. If it had been possible to secure ostriches, father would have done that.

As the house went up and the area surrounding it began to show results of the gardener's work, father remembered that in certain cities he had seen hedges and fences around the larger dwellings. A fence in Kashoffka, where a year before no one had even bolted a door! The rumor of the fence pervaded the village before the first post had been set. To the querulous old women a fence was not merely a protection for shrubs against strolling animals, but a sign of pride and selfishness. Pride was the human frailty most surely and swiftly punished by Al-

mighty God. And when Almighty God let loose the thunderbolts of his wrath, not infrequently innocent bystanders were injured. Punishment intended for Nathan the Wise might wipe out the whole community with disease or earthquake. Perhaps the Messiah would come and what would He think to see proud men building fences? To me now, removed from the scene by thousands of miles and by more than thirty years, those whisperings and fears are droll and amusing. But to a woman as sensitive as my mother, community disapproval, directed at the man she was bound to respect and defend, could not fail to disturb her. She did not let this appear on her face or in her actions, but it lowered her resistance. Saint-like, she could endure the hardships of pestilence or exposure. The fear of violence had never touched her, individually. How could any one injure her frail, sick body which she realized each day her spirit was occupying for a shorter term of time? With God everywhere, seeing and knowing everything, what had she to dread?

It was not so when father was in peril. Perhaps the most severe shock she received was when he was seized and dragged at the tail of the cart by the angry peasants who had been told they might take the hay which belonged to him. My father, once he understood how the men had been misled, forgave them promptly and set about getting revenge on the men who had set the trap for him. Life, however violent, was a game with him. But my mother, bewildered by the cries of the neighbors, seeing her two sons riding furiously to the field with weapons in their hands, and knowing that men she had nursed when they were ill and comforted when they were grieving were submitting her husband to a public indignity,

was stricken to the heart. It was hard for her at any time to believe in the ingratitude, greed, or bestiality of men. When those primitive qualities, always so near the surface in a community like Kashoffka, burst forth suddenly, unjustly, and without reason, as mob passions almost invariably do, she was deeply shocked.

The effect on herself she supported without complaint, but I was aware that more often she was regretting the influence such events might have on me. She did not blame me for grabbing up a whip and rushing to father's rescue. She herself had risen from her sick-bed with the intention of going to his aid. But when the neighbors suggested again and again that I had the Devil in me, it pained her. Even when mother acknowledged the imperfections of men and the undeveloped state of society, she could not help longing for more ideal relationships. Commerce was necessary, in order that men might live and be comfortable, but wrangling over business affairs seemed to her an overemphasis upon sordid and worldly considerations. Throughout all history there have been such characters, and of course the ones whose names are known played their beneficent rôle in communities far more renowned than Kashoffka could have been even if it had been allowed to exist. Men have called such people saints, as men still call my mother Hannah the Saint in the sphere in which she moved. Such characters are good without effort or ostentation and they keep alive the spark of human kindness and the aspirations of the best people, no matter how far their community may be from an ideal state. They are the custodians of the best in mankind.

After each crisis or dispute, mother regained her equanimity, but the effort taxed her strength, and I could not hide from myself that she was failing in health. The trees

began to grow. At daybreak the cries of the strange fowl mingled with the crowing of roosters. The huge wooden wheel began to turn, as the horses, blindfolded, plodded in their circle. The fence suggested a gate and the gate a bell, so that when any one entered the yard he was preceded by the tones which imitated, in a smaller way, the chimes of the Russian church. The house faced the river and was so attractive that father could not bear not to have a promenade in front of it, where the village people might go walking back and forth on Saturdays and Sundays. There was no room between the house and the water, but the river was shallow at that point and father conceived the idea of filling in an area toward the Grabley. That meant more shrubs and trees, more paths and decorations.

The fact that the house was situated near the shallow spot got us into another controversy which wore upon mother's nerves. Each August and September, before we built there, the peasants who entered the village used to ford the river across those same shallows, landing upon the bank where our improvements were being made. Having taken so much trouble to secure rare plants and flowers, father did not want them trampled upon, so he had a huge wooden post driven into the old roadway, blocking the passage in front of our house to wagons and forcing the drivers to take the longer route over the Grabley during the low-water season, as they did during the rest of the year. The peasants complained, and one morning we found that the post had been uprooted. It had disappeared, so we assumed that whoever had dug it up had rolled it into the river and let it float away. Father then had two posts driven in, forming a more effective barricade. Not many nights passed before both of them

followed their predecessor downstream. Father then set out four posts and hired a watchman who, armed with a heavy club, paced up and down in front of our dwelling all night, as if father had been the Governor of the province. Mother, who always slept lightly, was disturbed by this continual reminder of strife throughout the hours of darkness.

I believe it is a characteristic of most gentle people that they are extremely sensitive to noise. I remember now that as the hammers were banging against the boards continually, with an incessant racket from dawn until twilight, mother used to wince and bite her lips when she thought no one was looking. Added to the din of hammers was the clank of shovels, the shouts of workmen in Yiddish and the local dialect of Russian, the creaking of the wooden wheels and the tramp, tramp of the horses' hoofs. Compared to the stillness in which she had been accustomed to live, the place was a bedlam. Mother, even after a sleepless night, would get up at dawn to prepare breakfast for father and the rest of us, for she was reluctant to trust anything to servants which concerned us so intimately. All day the hammering and yelling continued, and in the evenings, instead of singing me to sleep as she had done in more peaceful days, she would be serving father's guests with tea and listening to their long harangues about deals and plans and lawsuits. Often the men in ordinary discussion would shout as if they were about to tear each other's throats.

Mother's increased responsibilities as a hostess alone placed a considerable burden upon her. Traveling merchants made our house their headquarters, mingling with the beggars we entertained. Officials made little trips to look over the plant and spread terror through the

town. The inhabitants had by no means grown accustomed to father's habit of taking matters to court. They were sure he was attracting undue attention to the town and that the long arm of the Government, which had left Kashoffka comparatively undisturbed for some years, would be stretched hungrily in their direction. The old clannish feeling that Jewish affairs and disputes must be kept distinct and separate from those of the Gentiles was often outraged when he applied for justice to an outside source. The fact that two of his principal pleasures, his home and his business, could be combined in a single establishment seemed ideal to father. Peasants from an ever-increasing zone brought their wool to be combed, their seeds to be pressed, their cereal to be treated and prepared. Not only were several of these processes noisy, but the odors which arose at times were terrific. As father grew more successful, the risk of robbery increased correspondingly. More of the merchants and traders depended upon him to act as their banker, which made collections more numerous and difficult.

One of the arguments used by Ilchichky and the others in their initial attempt to prevent father from securing a building permit had to do with the fumes and stenches which would arise. In those days it was firmly believed that a bad smell carried with it disease. In order to minimize the force of this contention, father had selected the site by the river, at some distance from the center of the town. The dampness of the air and of the ground in our new location aggravated mother's illness at once, especially in the early spring when the freshets swelled the river and caused it to overflow its banks, leaving stagnant pools on which insects bred as soon as the floods receded a little. Before I realized the effect the dampness was

having upon mother, I was as enchanted by the night noises as mother was disturbed by the tumult of the day. June-bugs and beetles whirred outside the window, mosquitoes whined angrily and were so troublesome that we all had to sleep under cheesecloth. Thousands of frogs croaked in every key and the crickets chirped incessantly. Again I was tempted to credit the tales of ghosts and devils, for the darkest night was surely filled with mysterious, invisible creatures. At dusk the bats would flit back and forth, in erratic zigzag paths, and the girls would run away for fear those strange creatures would get tangled in their hair. In the trees the owls would hoot and whimper.

I noticed first that mother was thinner and that tired lines were deepening in her face. It was out of the question to send for a doctor. There were no doctors. Years before she had consulted physicians in three or four distant cities, but none of them could diagnose her case satisfactorily. I know that blood appeared frequently on her handkerchief, but consumption was common in the village and no one believed that she had it. She, herself, and father thought it was a liver trouble she had. Once after the new house was built she made a long journey to see another doctor and he told her she needed rest and quiet. I did not find this out for a long time afterward. For her to have rest and quiet would have meant that father would have to change or relinquish his plans, and so, upon her return, she did not tell him what the doctor had ordered. She continued her work as best she could, never complaining and trying in every way to appear cheerful. On damp evenings she often had a chill and would excuse herself from the company in order to hide in some corner, while she was shivering and her teeth were chattering.

Later, when we could not help but notice this, I was often called to get into her bed and warm her with my own body which seemed to radiate plenty of heat at all times. Slowly she took me more and more into her confidence. Of course I had no idea at first of the gravity of her condition, but I understood that the confusion with which she was surrounded, which interested me so much and added so many things to my own life and interests, was wearing upon her. This knowledge made me more attentive to her and strengthened the bond between us.

She talked with me a great deal during this period, but seldom about herself. Her charitable work was continued in the usual way, but she let me do more and more of the errands and make the deliveries of food and clothing in her behalf. Each evening she would ask me about my lessons and would point out to me the errors or injustices I had committed. She spoke of the dignity of a rabbinical career, of the benefits to be derived from the learning of our forefathers, of the way in which devout, unselfish men could lighten the sorrows of their fellows and improve life as a whole, that possession which every human creature holds in common with the others. Her precepts were simple and understandable, based upon kindness and a regard for the rights of others. Men had good instincts, she said, if only they would follow them.

The townspeople, many of them, who knew that her dreams had been interpreted by leading rabbis throughout Russia and Austria, believed mother had the gift of prophecy and often asked her about the future. In recollecting her many words to me regarding charitable and religious endeavor, I often suspect that her intuition had warned her of the many circumstances which were later to divert me from a life of study. She had seen how interested I had become in business and how eagerly I entered into competition with others.

It cost her a greater effort each morning to rise, and the day arrived when she was forced to remain in bed. She made several attempts to get up and dress after that, but soon she was obliged to stay in bed all the time. She directed the housework, tried to take as good care of us as if she had been able to get about, and however badly she felt she did not forget the needs of the poor. On Mondays and Thursdays, as before, an extra large baking would be done and the food would be distributed in baskets according to her wishes. The slightest sign aroused a hope in me that she was getting better. At night my bed was placed near hers, so that I might hear her if she asked for anything. I did not think of her death, for death had never struck so close to me before. It never has since. During the months which followed, I was alternately in a fever of hope and a slough of disappointment. Nothing more was to be expected from the doctors, for another journey was impossible. Unable to give up the idea that she could be cured, Feivish and I particularly were on the lookout for healers and wonder-workers.

One evening about dusk a peasant came driving furiously across the Grabley and, instead of turning toward his house, guided his bewildered horse westward from the priest's house, through the Jewish section, and brought up with a crack of his whip in front of our establishment. He had important news. On his way from another town he had passed a group of Gypsies among whom was a man with miraculous powers, a very old man with skin like leather, white hair, and eyes which bored right through a person.

Incidents of this kind were not uncommon with us.

Every inhabitant of Kashoffka knew that Hannah the Saint was sick, and whenever one of them heard of a cure by any means whatsoever, he would rush to us in the hope that he would be instrumental in relieving my mother's suffering. The prayers for her which rose from the orthodox synagogue, the meeting-houses of the Chassidim and the Greek Catholic Church must have numbered many thousands. We thanked the peasant and Feivish looked at me. Now, as I have said, Feivish and his friend Gershon had spent their spare time in study for many years. According to the standards of Kashoffka, he was a highly educated man, knowing something of science and history and being familiar with several languages. If any more rational means had been available, I am sure Feivish would have resorted to them, but his heart was so tender that when reason failed he was willing to let the mystic side of his nature have its turn. I understood his glance and nodded, and we both hurried toward the stable. The peasant did not know whether the Gypsies intended to camp near us or go on, and we did not want to risk the chance of missing them, so mounted on the old white horse and on Dragun, the veteran cavalry steed, we rode out in the direction our informer had indicated.

As we crossed the Grabley, the light grew dim and the still reflections of the trees receded farther into the depths of the water. Already the crickets had commenced to chirp and the bats were darting here and there furiously in a final search for insects. We crossed the first bridge and passed in turn the blacksmith's shop and the two water mills, shouting a greeting to Yashka, who was watching us anxiously from his doorway. At the nobleman's garden we took the road to the left toward Roshist, listening to the night noises and the thuds of the horses'

hoofs. As we rode my spirits rose in spite of the slight warning in my mind which would have convinced me our search was futile if I had listened. I did not want to listen. I wanted to believe in the power of that unknown old man and to find his eyes more piercing and his skin more tough than the peasant had said they would be. The motion of a horse running forward through the air makes one hopeful and excited, even if there is no reason for it. After we had left behind the enormous storehouse and barn and the ruins of an old estate, the road plunged into thick woods and the darkness descended in earnest. The horses found their way, shying occasionally as some wild creature moved in the underbrush, but Feivish and I saw nothing but blackness ahead. We rode on, however, and at last I thought I saw the glow of a fire to our right. Feivish saw it, too, and decided it must be the camp-fire of the Gypsies. We headed that way, our horses stepping more cautiously and suspiciously as we left the traveled road. Bushes and the limbs of trees slapped my legs or my face occasionally, but the ground was fairly even.

A dog began to bark, then five or six or a dozen, and our horses were surrounded by a pack of half-wild and hungry dogs which followed the Gypsies on their wanderings. I was glad I was not alone.

Finally a voice cried out in a strange dialect: 'Who is there?'

'Thank God, at least, that they speak Russian,' Feivish whispered.

He replied that he was looking for the healer. We were near enough to see dimly a few faces around the camp-fire and one or two men came forward cautiously. As soon as the Gypsies were convinced we had actually come to consult the healer, they became more friendly and drove off

the dogs. We dismounted and were led before the old man whom the peasants had described. By the firelight I saw that he was, indeed, very old and that his eyes glistened. Feivish told him of mother's illness, enumerating her symptoms and telling what we had done to relieve her. The old man seemed to know exactly what was the matter. His manner, full of confidence, gave me courage, and I actually began to hope we had found a cure at last.

'Catch a handful of water spiders,' he said. 'Fry them alive and apply them in a poultice to the place where the trouble seems to be.'

The weird scene, his strange countenance and attire, the uncanny hour, and the gruesome prescription all helped to make his words impressive. Feivish gave him a coin and we set out for home, starting another chorus of barks from the hungry dogs. As we neared the edge of the woods, the moon came up above the rim of trees which encircled Kashoffka, casting long shadows from the ruins of the old estate and the windmill. The village across the river, silvered by the moonlight, was slumbering, and whatever was unsightly was hidden and blended into a peaceful vista. Beyond lay the fields and the pastures on the gentle slopes. Still farther the woods awaited. We were silent about the remedy, neither of us wishing to discourage the other. Mother knew what had been our errand, but I did not tell her what had been suggested. I merely said we had found the healer, that he was a wise old man, and that in the morning we would prepare the poultice he had recommended.

I slept fitfully, and at dawn was on the river-bank with a bottle in which to imprison the spiders. If the Gypsy had prescribed land spiders, my task would have been easier, for at the back of our sheds where the sun shone long

hours each day were black and yellow spiders who waited lazily for the flies and insects to get entangled in their webs, and in the woods, around the roots of trees, were small gray spiders which were not hard to catch. The water spiders moved swiftly over the surface, in the smooth backwater, skimming so lightly out of reach that it was hours before I had captured a handful. In this, as in other things, I reasoned that if one handful of spiders was good, two handfuls would be better, and so I got fully twice as many as had been specified. I knew that if mother saw what was being prepared for her, the thought of the sufferings of the spiders would sadden and disturb her, so I went to Bessie's house, borrowed a frying-pan, and shook the spiders from the bottle into the pan, holding them in by means of a cover until they were thoroughly cooked. Feivish went with me to mother's bedside and the spider poultice was applied as directed, but as the hours passed by and no improvement in mother's condition was noticeable, I began to lose heart and to realize that once again we had failed. Very often mother would pretend to feel better, so as not to disappoint us.

More than once we visited the settlement of Poles, where the strong old man lived who had felled Stanislav with the fence post. The poverty of the Poles made the most humble resident of Kashoffka appear rich by contrast. I have never seen men struggle so hard for an existence, but they were never despondent very long. One of their number had a reputation for curing disease and foretelling the future, two accomplishments which were often found in the same person in our district. The Pole treated his absent patients by means of a wad of beeswax which he would melt over a fire which had to be made from certain twigs. As the wax melted, it would take strange

shapes, sometimes of animals or inanimate objects easily recognizable. If the wax formed itself into a human figure, it was considered a good omen, the best possible sign for the recovery of a sick person or the marriage of a daughter. In our case, this result was obtained. The wax transformed itself into a dwarf with a peaked cap, and the Pole was overjoyed. He sent us away with a measure of his contagious optimism which diminished the farther we traveled from his house.

Mother's appetite began to fail. For years she had not been a hearty eater, but she always tried to eat so the rest of us would not be depressed by her inability to swallow food. Now, for days at a time, she would be unable to take nourishment. She lost weight, of course, and her appearance changed gradually from day to day. Still her eyes were bright and her voice was soft and expressive. All around her the usual bustle and confusion continued. The peasants who brought their goods to us told others, until the news spread in a wider circle and father was fairly swamped with business. The more money he made, the more anxious mother was to see that no one should starve or suffer from the cold.

Even then I did not anticipate the end. She had been ill since I was born, had often been confined to bed for weeks, so I supposed in my childish way that eventually she would recover. I am sure none of our relatives or friends were aware how sick she was, principally because she took such pains to conceal it from every one. On a Friday, however, she took a quick turn for the worse and we all were alarmed. Since she insisted that we do so, we prepared for the Sabbath as usual, and as we set off for the synagogue, she told me to be sure and ask any strangers there to come to our house as usual. It was then she

told us that the end was near, that she must begin to prepare for the journey to the other world, but she said that the Sabbath would not be disturbed. I remember that I found two strangers in the synagogue and obediently brought them home with me. None of us were in the mood to sing the Psalms, as is the custom on Friday evening, but she requested that the singing go on as usual and that I join in.

The idea that she was to go away forever dazed me so that I was unable thoroughly to grasp it. Since the day I was born I had had mother with me and nothing in my experience gave me any criterion by which I could appreciate what life would be without her. It is merciful, in such cases, that the realization of the enormity of one's loss comes gradually. Her room was next to that in which we were singing, and as I sang the Psalms, Bessie standing in the doorway saw a tear on mother's cheek. That was the nearest she came to exhibiting her own sorrow. On Saturday forenoon we went to the synagogue again, and when we returned to the house the food which had been placed in the oven before the Sabbath began, at sunset the previous evening, was taken out by the Sabbath-Goy and put before us. To our surprise, mother asked for food. She had not eaten for several days, but she tried to swallow a few mouthfuls in order that the rest of us should not be downhearted.

Night came, and we all gathered in her room. Then it was that she asked father to find old Morris the bathman. Morris, in addition to his work as custodian of the bath, dug the graves. Mother requested at the same time that all necessary arrangements for her burial be made, telling us that she would die the following morning and did not want her body to remain too long in the house. We all assured her that she had a long time to live.

'No,' she said calmly. 'I know that my end has come. Go, please, and do as I ask.'

A neighbor saw father enter Morris's house, and the word spread quickly through the village that Hannah the Saint was dying. Everybody, Jew and Gentile alike, left whatever he was doing, and all flocked to our house. Mother was cordial and self-possessed. In fact, in the whole household, I might say in the whole village, she was the only one in full control of herself. She spoke pleasantly to all her old friends, shook hands with all the neighbors, said good-bye to everybody as if she were actually going on a journey. The scene resembled those which took place when some one departed for America, only on the eve of mother's death there was more of a hush, for the men and women spoke in low voices and held back their tears until they were outside.

Our neighbors believed that mother could carry messages to their loved ones who had died, and they crowded in, making her promise to seek out husbands, fathers, mothers, or wives, or children in the other world, and acquaint them with the difficulties of those left behind. There was a widow who had lost her husband six years before, and had been left with many children. She was obliged to travel from village to village, doing odd jobs of work, for which she was very badly paid, and her children were in great need. This widow threw herself into a passionate plea that mother should see her dead husband, Yankel, and demand of him why he did not intercede to make her lot more bearable. I can hear her questions to mother to this day, for she worked herself up to a terrible pitch of excitement:

'Wasn't I a good wife to him? Didn't I leave a good home and better prospects in order to marry him? Didn't

I nurse him through months of sickness, when everybody else gave up his life and prevented it by praying before the scrolls? Haven't I been a good mother to his children? Haven't I toiled morning, noon and night? Can't he see the blisters on my hands and my feet sore from tramping and working and my face wrinkled with responsibilities?' she wailed.

'Why doesn't he come, at least in my dreams, to comfort me? It is now eight months since I have seen him in a dream. If I have done wrong at any time, I beg him to forgive me, but if he doesn't come to me in a dream, I, too, shall die, and what will become of the children?'

Other messages were poured into mother's ears, and she listened patiently and sympathetically.

After the last visitor had gone, mother insisted that we all go to bed and get some sleep. In order to please her we lay down, but nobody undressed. She asked that I sleep on the bed opposite her. We all knew the reason. She pretended to sleep; so did I. But from the corner of our eyes we watched each other, sometimes catching one another's glances or the glint of hidden tears.

At dawn she called for us and said: 'They are here. You had better get ready.'

'Who is here?' father asked.

Mother did not reply, but at that moment I saw three men enter the room, men I had never seen before. It seemed to me that there was something peculiar about their shadows, which remained on the brick wall. Mother then asked us if we saw the guests. To my astonishment, no one else seemed to see the three men or to be aware of their presence. I spoke up at once and described them, pointing in the direction in which they appeared to be standing. From my description, others recognized my

grandfathers and a great-grandfather, all of whom had died before I was born.

'Are all the plans for burial complete?' mother asked father.

'Yes,' he said; and then in the presence of all of us he told her that he had one last request to make, before she died, and that he wanted her to decide whether or not it was a fair one.

'What is it?' she asked.

I have already explained, I think, that for every good deed a pious Jew believed the recording angel made a mark to his credit. The mark was called a 'mitzvah.' On the other hand, for evil deeds, an 'avairah' was recorded. On the Day of Judgment, the two columns are balanced and the fate of the soul on trial is decided in this way. Father advanced the proposition that, since all her charitable work had been carried on with the money he had earned, he was entitled to one half of her 'mitzvahs.' From what I have said of both of them, it will readily be understood what a tremendous difference that would make in their accounts with the angel.

That scene I can never forget. The dawn was a threatening one and the whine of the wind and the dark clouds already made it plain that a terrible storm was about to break. The members of our household, pale and disheveled, stood fearfully around the room, and there by the brick wall were those three old patriarchs, with long beards and clasped hands, strange witnesses to a strange drama. Father's face, as he uttered the request, was drawn and anxious. Mother agreed at once.

The ceremony which ensued is one of the most solemn which may take place among Jews. Messengers were sent to the various houses and the quorum was soon assembled. The rabbi arrived in his black-and-white robes and shawl, his silver hair and pink, transparent skin catching the thin light which came through the windows. The wind was rising and as the incantations were pronounced, it was necessary for the rabbi to raise his voice more and more to make it distinct above the roar of the elements.

The actual transfer of mitzvahs is symbolized by both parties grasping a handkerchief. The one who is offering them takes the handkerchief first and holds it out to the other, who accepts. Only if the mitzvahs are offered freely can the ceremony be effective. Mother, still in full control of her faculties, but very weak, took the crimson handkerchief from the rabbi's hand and with the kindest imaginable gesture held it toward my father. As he stood by the bedside, looking down at her emaciated hand and listening to the solemn words, she raised her eyes, and nothing could be more unmistakable than the joy she took in improving her husband's chances for an eternity in Heaven. Even I understood at that moment how thoroughly her attitude showed that her acts of charity had been performed with no thought of the benefits to be derived later by herself.

Some one turned down the kerosene lamp which had been burning unnoticed in a corner. Mother asked me to come forward and took hold of my hand.

'Harry,' she said, 'I have but one regret in leaving this world, and that is that I may not remain to see you become the kind of man I know you will be.'

She closed her eyes. Her hand fell to the covers, and she died almost instantly. My sister took me by the shoulders and tried to get me out of the room so that I should not hear the two last gasps by which the breath

leaves the body. These sounds resemble so much the gasps which occur when an animal's throat is cut that the belief had grown up that an unseen angel cuts the throat of the corpse. If, between the first and second gasps, there is crying and excitement, it is believed that death may be thus delayed for days or even weeks, causing terrible suffering. Such a death is considered unholy.

I did hear the sounds, however, for Bessie was not quick enough. The grief which we had restrained so long suddenly broke out. In spite of the storm, the house was soon crowded. Preparation of the body for burial was begun immediately in conformity to mother's wish. The women who washed the body still declare that when it was naked the face showed displeasure. As the candles were lighted and placed upon the floor, we all began to pray. I was given first place, nearest her face, and remained there until I was torn away. By that time the storm had developed into a real blizzard and the old folks were whispering that God was cruel to send such a stormy day when Hannah the Saint was to be buried. Others said the storm was a sign of mother's saintliness, since God tests the pious even at the time of death and of burial in order that more blessing may be heaped upon them in Heaven.

It was suggested at once that special honors be paid my mother and a prolonged discussion took place among the elders. Some one suggested that her body be taken into each of the three synagogues in turn, but some of the elders objected on account of the religious custom which forbids the entrance of the dead into the synagogue. Others claimed that mother was not an ordinary mortal, but a saint, and therefore the rule did not apply. Of course, the members of our family took no part in the argument,

which for a while threw the house into confusion. The poor and ignorant men, who were not considered worthy to join in such a dispute, crowded around to listen, and one after another the wise ones expressed their opinions, often two or three of them talking at one time. Meanwhile, the candles burned before the body and visitors passed by to murmur a farewell prayer and to send messages to their dead and to implore her to intercede for them. A compromise was finally reached, and it was agreed that her body should be carried to the door of the synagogues and that, as the procession approached, the scrolls should be taken from the ark and should be brought out to witness her departure.

Her body was placed upon a stretcher, wrapped in a linen shroud, and so many men wanted to act as pallbearers that it was necessary for them to take turns, so every few yards the procession halted in order that the pallbearers might be changed. Only the most worthy and pious were given the honor of helping to carry her to the grave, in which the coffin had already been lowered to receive her body. As the pallbearers carried her out of our doorway, the storm beat upon them, flapping their garments and causing the followers to bow their heads before the rain and to shiver with cold. Slowly the procession made its way toward the Kalina Chassid synagogue. As we approached, the Chassidim, attired in their symbolical garments of wool, came to the doorway with bowed heads, holding the scrolls in their hands. It happened that at that exact moment the storm subsided and the sun broke suddenly through the clouds which dispersed with amazing rapidity. The Chassidim were seized with religious ecstasy, and all the Jews considered that God had given them a direct sign of mother's saint-

hood. From that point on, the procession was bathed in bright sunshine while the trees and the eaves of the entire village glistened with water drops and icicles as bright as jewels. The mood had shifted from despair to sadness tinged with hope, and every man and woman felt that a memorable event was taking place, an event which brought them for a while much nearer to the God they worshiped so fervently.

The pallbearers marched on to the next synagogue, the oldest and most spacious of the three, where mother had been a member of the congregation. There were more scrolls in that synagogue and more worshipers gathered there to help bring them forward. The sound of prayer and chanting rose higher, and, as the body was brought into the presence of the Holy Torah, a poor woman who had been the recipient of mother's charity for years, unknown to her neighbors, threw herself forward and prostrated herself before the scrolls, crying aloud of the help she had received from mother and asking God to accept her humble testimony of the goodness of the one about to be received into His Holy Kingdom. This spontaneous act caused scores of other men and women to follow the example, and one by one they came forward, poor men, cripples, impoverished students, teachers.

'Who is going to feed us now?'

'Who will take care of us, now Hannah the Saint has gone?'

'Who now will pay for the schooling of my children?'

'Who will provide dowry for the poor girls?'

'Who will take care of the orphans?'

The people to whom I had secretly delivered bundles of food announced this fact and called upon all pious Jews to witness their statements. Each one would bow

down before the scrolls to confirm his words. The cries grew louder, until the entire throng stood with arms outstretched, wailing, lamenting, and shouting mother's good deeds to Heaven. At the third synagogue the holy man himself bore the scrolls from the ark to the doorway and, holding up his hand for silence, announced that he, too, had been receiving sustenance from Hannah the Saint.

In order to reach the Jewish cemetery, it was necessary to pass through a section of the village occupied by the Russian peasants. From the time we had left our house, many peasants had marched at the foot of the procession. As the body was borne through the street, many others, who had remained at a distance in the belief that the Jews would prefer not to have those of other faith present on such occasions, knelt with their wives and little children by the roadside, praying and making the sign of the cross. They formed a line on each side of the road, weeping bitterly, with their knees in the snow.

The place selected for mother's burial was directly in front of a little shrine where a renowned ancestor of our old ruv was interred. That was a high distinction, since the tomb in question was in the exact center of the burying-ground, the holiest place. Not only our townspeople, but the inhabitants of other villages considered the tomb a sort of shrine and often went there to pray. As the body was lowered into the grave, it was turned to face Jerusalem, to indicate the hope the Jews cherish to return again to the homeland. Several of the witnesses claim that the body turned of its own accord. Sam and I said Kadish and the others joined us in the final prayer. Sadly we walked home for the eight days of mourning.

The strain of the hours preceding mother's death and

the religious excitement which attended her burial caused a severe reaction in me the moment I entered the house again. I thought of the three old men whose shadows I had seen on the wall and was terrified. I was in such fear that I could not be left alone a moment, even in the daytime. According to custom, we were to remain in the house, in our stocking feet, sitting upon the floor, for eight days while the mourners chanted, prayed, and wailed continually. All the rest of the day, after the burial, I was trembling and shaking, but as soon as I was able to sleep — and I was so exhausted that sleep finally overcame my will — I dreamed that mother stood by my side and told me not to be afraid, that she would always be near to guide me. As soon as I awoke, I told the others about my dream and experienced no fear thereafter.

I have told about seeing the figures of those three old men in full knowledge that it may be discredited. If some one else should tell me of a similar experience to-day, I am frank to say that I should not accept the statement unreservedly. But the scene is deeply engraved upon my mind in such vivid details, and my memory has proved so accurate in other matters which have been confirmed by my old neighbors, that I consider it would be dishonest for me to relate the circumstances of my mother's death otherwise than as I remember them. It is certain that I had never seen either of my grandfathers, nor the great-grandfather I described. Yet a number of people who knew them were able to identify them at my mother's deathbed by my description and all the members of our family heard my mother's words concerning the three guests. The memory of that incident has kept alive in me a strong conviction that we live in a world of mystery, in the midst of many things which we cannot,

in our present stage of development, explain or understand.

In large cities, where the misery and squalor is overwhelming and beyond the power of any single person to alleviate, sensitive persons like my mother are often bowed down beneath the weight of the suffering they feel but cannot relieve. To-day, when the beat of life is so much quickened, when civilization has complicated everything beyond the dreams of any simple villager of the last century, I doubt whether such a character could exist. Kashoffka was not so large that mother could not reach every nook and corner of it. She knew the inhabitants by name, knew their history and their griefs. Her means were sufficiently ample for her to exert a helpful influence and this made it possible for her to bear the sorrows of others she could not avoid sharing on account of her sensitivity. If no place is to be found in modern life for such calm spirits, if the weaklings are to be despised and weeded out, and human sympathy is to perish slowly in the pressure of competitive endeavor and the speed of modern existence, the loss will be great, especially to those of us who in our childhood came in contact with the healing influence of compassion and unselfishness.

II

THE most joyous Jewish holiday is Shavooish, which falls seven weeks after Passover, when the lilacs and the other spring flowers are in bloom and the trees are airing their new green foliage. In Volhynia a wild plant called lepachy has long, broad leaves which remain firm and green for days after they are picked and this plant is used for decoration on Shavooish. Every one in our section of Kashoffka used to go into the woods, in the damp and swampy areas, to gather lepachy, which was strewn over the floors of the houses and the synagogue, festooned around doors and windows, and mingled with flowers which were strung in chains or made into wreaths. The fragrance of lepachy is fresh and stimulating and our whole village was transformed each year into a leafy and beautiful spot. In the synagogue the story of Ruth the Gleaner was read, for the festival originally was the celebration of the harvest, and, although it was centuries since the Jews of Russia and Poland had been permitted to engage in agriculture, the holiday retained its ancient character.

There are special Psalms also which are recited, and on the Shavooish preceding my mother's death I had been given the honor of singing one of those Psalms whose melody runs through my mind to this day.

How differently I felt on the Shavooish which followed her death! The holiday came only a few months after our eight days of mourning. As I put on my boots, after our long vigil with the mourners, and went out again into the streets of Kashoffka, everything appeared to be changed

in a way I could not grasp. The atmosphere, all the colors and shapes of the houses, seemed grotesque and alien. On the holiday I could not bear to enter the synagogue, decorated so gayly with green leaves and blossoms, nor the houses of our neighbors. I avoided the others and lay for hours flat on my stomach on the wooden fence which bordered our land along the river, gazing silently upon the moving water surface which I had grown to detest.

So many of our friends remarked that the dampness from the river, most noticeable during the thaw just before Passover, had hastened mother's end, that I developed a dislike for the river I had loved since I was an infant. The water mills revolved slowly, showering drops of water in the air, and in a dazed condition I lay there all day and no one came to disturb me.

Almost immediately afterward, less than two months after mother was buried, father set out on a long journey, saying that he would be gone two months. Before he was out of sight the tongues of the village began wagging.

'Nathan is looking for another wife,' the people said, and they shook their heads disapprovingly.

'To think he would marry so soon!' they added.

My brother Sam heard the rumor before I did and at once believed it was true. He left the house and refused to take charge of the work or to have any further dealings with the workmen. Bessie burst into tears and her friends rushed to her house to console her, moaning and protesting at the insult to my mother's memory.

I understood what had caused their perturbation, but I did not share their feelings that father had done wrong and was not to be forgiven, for I had been close to mother in her last days and had realized that she herself had felt

that her illness had been a handicap to father. I knew that she thought he had been deprived of many attentions a wife should give and so I was not so bitter as my brother and sister appeared to be. Rather than let the mills come to a standstill I took charge myself, hiring men to drive the horses and tend the machinery, dickering with the peasants who brought their produce to be chopped or refined, keeping strict account of every kopek taken in or paid out. I was very busy, of course, but the work took my mind off my sorrow and helped me to adjust myself to a life in which mother played no active part. Still, for many days we were not sure as to the object of father's trip.

Finally a letter arrived. He had married a rabbi's daughter in Brest-Litovsk (the town which afterward came into prominence on account of the treaty which the Germans there forced upon the defeated Russians). He begged all his children to forgive him.

Neither Sam nor Bessie would relent and they made no preparations to receive him and his new bride. So I took up the broom, swept the house from one end to the other, dusted the furniture and did what I could to make the place presentable. The villagers saw father's wagon approaching the Grabley and Bessie shut the door of her house tight and refused to show herself. Sam did likewise. He had removed his bed and his wardrobe to Bessie's place. I alone was in the house to greet them and father, having feared that all of us would turn against him, seemed grateful for what I had done. My stepmother, a young and handsome woman, was very cordial to me, and as a reward for my loyalty they bought some expensive cloth to have made into a suit for me, but which was never made. It was put off from time to time, on the

ground that I would not need new clothes until the next Passover. Long before that time my stepmother and I were openly hostile to one another.

It is strange how people are alienated from one another by trifles, after having forgiven more grave offenses. All the money I had taken in was carefully accounted for and I had kept none at all for myself. At the time I was in need of a jackknife such as some of the Poles and peasants made with a single blade which folded into a carved wooden handle. There were two kinds for sale, one which cost three kopeks, and the other five kopeks. As a reward for my work at the mill in father's absence, I asked him to buy me a jackknife which he readily consented to do. When he brought it to me, I saw at once that it was the cheaper three-kopek variety and I cannot convey the blackness of my disappointment. I might have held out enough money to buy a dozen of the most expensive knives without his knowing it. Those two kopeks have always rankled in my mind. It is impossible to say how much they cost my father in terms of my regard for him.

Since he had lost Sam's services around the mill, he wished to utilize mine. I had managed things well while he was away and more and more the value of my red hair was apparent for throughout the whole district it was said by the peasants that Nathan the Wise had a red-headed son who brought them luck. I was taken from school, and there ended my mother's plan to make me a rabbi.

The first one to protest was the old white-haired ruv, the most learned and pious man in the neighborhood. From the day I had entered the Hebrew school I had been one of the most promising pupils and each of my many teachers had praised me. The old rabbi was well

aware of the modernizing influences creeping into his orthodox congregation. The threat of America, as a land where Jews became like Gentiles, hovered always over him and his colleagues who were trying to hold the Jews together and to keep up their respect for ancient traditions. He was not the only one who was agitated. The members of the orthodox congregation, all of whom had revered my mother, resented what they interpreted as another slight to her memory. The elders were firm in their stand for the dignity of scholarship and their preference for material poverty over that of the soul. Gossip was not hard to stir up and the old women trotted from house to house.

'Have you heard about poor Hannah's son, may her soul rest in peace?' they would murmur. 'Nathan has taken him from the Cheder.'

In justice to my father I must admit that the work around our growing establishment interested me very much. I liked to watch the machinery in motion, to go from shed to shed supervising the workmen three or four times as old as I was. The school, with its endless recitations aloud and the painful efforts of the duller members of the class to learn the simplest passages, was tedious at times, although the prospect of a career as a rabbi was still attractive to me. I really wanted to be in both places at once. Not many weeks passed before Sam became partially reconciled with father. He came back to the mill and later brought back his bed from Bessie's house, but he never spoke to our stepmother unless it was absolutely necessary and the coldness between them in no way diminished. She made some efforts to win him over; at least she let it appear that she desired his affection. Then one Friday evening after the singing of the Psalms, father

and stepmother were seated at the table in the dining-room talking, and I, tired from a hard day's work, had rested my head upon my arms as if I were asleep. I heard her tell father that Sam had held out some of the money he had collected that day. Father was at once angered and yelled to Sam in the next room demanding to know what he had done with the money.

'Why do you think he has your money?' my stepmother asked aloud, as if she were siding with Sam.

I had been awake and had heard every word, so I accused her openly of stirring up father's suspicion and then pretending to take the other side. The incident led to a dispute which involved all of us and made my stepmother especially resentful toward me. After that evening we clashed more frequently, each of us being sensitive to the hostility of the other. Mother had taken such tender care of me that it seemed now as if I were always being slighted. The meals were irregular and not so good as we had had before. I noticed that instead of giving me cream with my cereal in the morning, my stepmother diluted the cream with water. I began to stand up for what I considered my rights, even to demand things I had not had before mother died.

The preserves were kept in a special closet and were not used except when some one was ill, or on holidays or special occasions. One week day I insisted upon having some jam and my stepmother naturally refused to give me any. I only wanted it because it was a luxury and had been prepared by my mother. My stepmother grabbed the keys and when I demanded them and threatened to break the closet door she said:

'I will throw you out of my house.'

The words 'my house' infuriated me so I grabbed up a

hatchet and smashed the door. Stepmother started screaming, father rushed in, and gave me such a beating that my ears rung for hours afterward, and it was several days before I could use my bruised limbs and muscles again. All our neighbors, especially the workmen, knew what had happened and the talk which had started when I was taken from school was nothing compared to the whispering that went around on the day of my first severe beating.

During the last weeks of mother's illness I had stayed in the house most of the time. Now I avoided it, taking advantage of every possible opportunity to go on long errands and to remain away at mealtime. While the weather was fair, the horses were driven out to pasture at night. Formerly I had tried to get permission to watch them, but mother had thought it was not safe for me to remain out of doors all night. Now father consented to let me go. There was little danger, for the other men who owned horses joined us and we would sit together around a fire, trusting to the dogs to warn us if the animals strayed too far away in grazing. The wolves often attacked the colts and one night I saw a pack of what I thought were dogs snapping at a mare's heels and beat them off with a club. The dogs turned out to be wolves, but one or two of the men came to my rescue.

The cool, quiet pastures, where I could hear the wind brushing the trees in the near-by woods and the horses munching and shifting their hobbled feet on the turf, stirred an irresistible desire in me to travel. The nights were so vast, the movements of the moths and bats and night birds so mysterious, the stars glowed so fiercely at times and again seemed to lift themselves so far away, the wind smelled so enticingly of pines or the faintly tainted

odor of the river, that as I sat on the grass through the long dim hours, watching men move like shadows and shadows take the shapes of beasts and men, I was conscious of a delicious restlessness. To be sent away from the village in charge of a band of horses meant my first taste of freedom, my first adventure in which I could work independently. I suppose that the urge for liberty in almost every one takes the form in the beginning of a desire to stay away from home all night. I had been taken to villages twenty or thirty miles distant to attend weddings, occasionally, and our Odyssey at the time of the plague remained vivid in my mind, but on that occasion my family moved with me and made it seem as if we were traveling on a boat where the passengers never changed and where it was harder than ever to get away.

My curiosity about the outside world, just after mother's death, was focused upon the city of Roshist, where father made frequent trips to sell the pressed cakes of linseed which remained after the oil had been squeezed out. I had heard the ox merchants talk about that city, and the most adventurous peasants, who returned from yearly shopping expeditions there, told amazing tales of what they had seen. Cities all over the world are renowned for some special reason — London for its fog, Bar-le-Duc for its confiture, Naples because of its proximity to Mount Vesuvius, Johnstown for its flood. Roshist, is not so well known as any of the above, but throughout the Volhynia district and all the surrounding districts of Russia and Poland, even as far as Austria and Lithuania, it is famous for its mud. From what I had heard, I visualized Roshist as a lake of mud upon which struggled the heads of men and animals, splashing and trying to swim to safety, or clinging to the roofs and chimney tops

which protruded through the slimy surface. Later I learned that there were streets upon which one could walk without sinking to one's waist; that buildings had been made there with rooms one on top of the other, three deep; that the railroad train which I had heard the wanderers imitate rushed through the city two and three times a day, and that a mill there was driven by fire and steam instead of water.

A few years before, a number of peasants living in villages nearer to Roshist than Kashoffka was had felt the same overwhelming desire to see the railroad train in motion and had organized a sort of pilgrimage for that purpose. Each one of them was sure the Devil was in the cab of the engine, clad in red and strewing coals of fire in his pathway, and as they had approached the city a few of the timid ones hung back. Most of them approached within a few yards of the rails, however, and looked up and down the track. Nothing was in sight. The countryside was quiet and peaceful, men and wagons moved slowly to and from the city, the sun had risen, so after their long night's walk the peasants went to sleep, leaving one of their number to watch. Two hours afterward, the watchman awoke them. He had seen a cloud forming upon the horizon shaped like a goat, and the goat was the animal most frequently chosen by the Devil to impersonate. Somewhat refreshed by their sleep, the other peasants scrutinized the cloud, which by that time had changed its shape into that of a loaf of bread. Two more hours passed and then a long gray serpent with red eyes appeared at the end of the tracks, miles away. Even as the peasants turned to look at one another, it grew larger and came swiftly in their direction. One man started to run and others followed, afraid to look back, in terror of their

lives. When the train passed, they were several hundred yards away and facing in the other direction, so they returned to their respective villages as ignorant of railroading as they had been before. Their belief in devils and miracles, however, was much strengthened.

After several nights in the pasture, having brought the horses home safely each morning, I asked my father to take me with him on his next journey to Roshist. He agreed, for I think he was anxious to become reconciled with me and to counteract the impression throughout the village that I resented his having taken me out of school. We set out on a Saturday evening, after sundown. All such business trips were started at that hour, so that we might travel on Sunday when the peasants would not work and by driving on Sunday night might have the horses back in Kashoffka early on Monday to begin another week's work. The horses rested in the middle of the week while the men were working hardest, but the unfortunate animals whose masters used them each day got no rest at all. As a child, I always respected a man whose horse was fat and disliked one whose horse was lean and bony.

The moment the Sabbath was over, we loaded the wagon with cakes of linseed from the press. The cakes were two or three feet in diameter, circular and flat, perhaps two inches thick. I think they were used also to mix with fodder or to feed to cattle. We received them in part payment for pressing out the oil, and in our factory, I assure you, no by-products were wasted. I had seldom been more excited than when we crossed the Grabley. Upon reaching the lord's estate we took the road to the left, the route Feivish and I had followed to find the wonder-working Gypsy. We drove all night through the

woods, and when father got hungry he would hand over the reins to me, so that he might eat some of the food we had brought with us. I was almost too agitated to eat and kept asking questions about the three-story buildings, the railroad, and especially the mud. When the dawn came, I looked out over an entirely strange countryside where no river divided the landscape, but the villages in the distance resembled Kashoffka otherwise, and the peasants we saw were dressed as our peasants were. Still it had for me almost the flavor of a foreign land and I urged the horses onward, trying to put as many miles as possible between us and home. I should have liked to continue driving days and days, perhaps forever.

Father was anxious to hurry, also, for he wanted to get through his business in Roshist as quickly as possible and get back to the mill. In spite of the law forbidding the transaction of business on Sunday, he knew where to find any number of Jewish stores to which admittance through the back door could be had and where he could unload his linseed cakes without fear of arrest. The officials had all been paid not to notice.

'There is Roshist,' he said at last, pointing to a faint gray mass of roofs and smoke in the distance. As we came nearer I was able to appreciate the Roshist mud, for our wagon wheels sank deeper and deeper and the horses had to slow down to a walk and finally to struggle along, inch by inch, with muscles bulging and traces taut. I began to be afraid we should never get there. The mud rose to the hubs of the wheels and father swore as he saw that the sun had dried the mud just enough to make it thick and practically impassable. Still we moved, an inch at a time, and the buildings grew more distinct. I saw that actually the builders had piled one room on

top of another, and father pointed out a tall smokestack which he said marked the location of the mill run by steam power. I was surprised that the city spread out over so large an area. From a distance it had looked so small that I had been disappointed. Now I realized there were more houses in that one city than I had ever seen before.

We were stuck. No amount of beating would goad the horses to move another inch. The mud was over the hubs of the wheels, two-thirds of the way to the top, touching the horses' bellies. Father stepped out of the wagon, sinking in over his knees, and jabbed the horse nearest him in the tenderest part of his groin with the butt of the whip. It was no use. The horses could not move. Father was angry, for delay meant a bad start at the mill that week. We took some boards from the side of the wagon and made a sort of platform on the mud by the roadside, unloading half the linseed cakes, but the wagon had settled so firmly by that time that the horses could not pull it with a reduced load. Impatiently father set out on foot for the city to get more horses and told me to guard the wagon.

I was too disappointed and stunned to protest before he got out of hearing. I knew what our delay would mean, that I should not see the wonders of Roshist at all, except for the mud of which I was already heartily tired. It was impossible for me to accept such a situation. I looked at the horses and wagon, so deep in the mire that nothing could budge them, and decided it was quite unnecessary to guard such immovable property. No one was in sight to carry away the linseed cakes. One or two more or less would not have mattered anyway, for they were worth only a few kopeks apiece. So I set out on foot,

avoiding the muddy roadway and cutting across country to save time. On the edge of the city I found myself confronted by a stone wall six feet high with ivy growing on it. Fences did not impress me much, since we had one at home, so I climbed over and found myself in a garden more beautiful than any I had seen before. I started to cross it, being careful not to step on the plants or injure the flowers, but before I had progressed far I saw another boy about my own age, perhaps a little larger, and dressed more resplendently than even Sam had ever been able to attire himself. The other boy saw me and, much surprised, came running indignantly in my direction.

Unfortunately since Schmelik the Scribe had left town my Russian lessons had been dropped and the Russian I had heard was distorted by the local dialect called Chachlatski. The boy asked me a question which I only dimly understood but I assumed that he was asking me what business I had in his garden and explained in my best Chachlatski that I was in a hurry to get to Roshist because our horses were stuck in the mud, and I had taken a short cut. By the expression on his face I deduced that I might as well have been speaking American or Eskimo. He took the harshness of my unintelligible words to be a threat and made a move to strike me with a stick he had in his hand. I cannot say exactly how it happened, but the first thing I knew we were fighting and I had all the best of it until three or four servants began belaboring me with clubs and I was dragged into the presence of a man whose brightly colored uniform, medals, epaulettes, and braid would have terrified me even if I had been in a less bewildered state. I had been trespassing on the grounds owned by the Pristiff, and had beaten up the Pristiff's favorite son.

In order that my predicament may be fully appreciated, I must explain that the Pristiff has at least three gold buttons and three yards of gold braid for every one worn by a Rotnik, that the Pristiff's trousers are of the brightest vermilion and his boots of patent leather which would make that of a mere Rotnik look shabby. It is possible that a Pristiff would kick a Rotnik in the behind as casually as the Rotnik might kick a peasant. The result was that, after thorough and strenuous beating, I was thrown into jail and the door was bolted behind me. So my record must stand. Within five minutes upon my first entrance into city life I was in jail.

All I could do was to pace the damp dirt floor and try not to breathe too deeply. The stink was frightful, and almost no light got in. Father, outside, had a more exciting day. He returned with a man and an extra pair of horses and found the wagonload of linseed cakes deserted. After digging the mud for my corpse, he and his helper loaded the wagon again, hitched on the horses in front of our own pair and got the load moving. All the way to the store he told the other man of what he would do to me when he found me. He saw nothing of me along the way, and before he reached the place where the linseed was sold got thoroughly anxious. The kidnaping of boys for the army had been discontinued years before, but for other purposes young folks were often lured away and the whole Jewish neighborhood turned out in an effort to find me. Father hesitated to notify the police, for that always meant trouble. The police disliked to be disturbed and the men with whom father was dealing were in fear of being held up for larger payments of hush money if they blatantly called attention of the officials to the fact that they were doing business on Sunday. Hours passed

and not a clue could be unearthed. No one had seen me enter the city, although there were several houses along the road I would naturally have taken.

Late in the afternoon the doors of the jail were opened, with clanking of huge keys, and father was admitted. Behind him was an officer who had told him I had assaulted the Pristiff's son. In the back room of a store a meeting of influential Jewish business men was being held to discuss ways and means of getting me out. The matter was arranged by the payment of small sums here and there, and, once the money was in their hands, the officials took my offense as a joke, laughing and giving me good advice as I was set free. Father was furious. The trip had been delayed, his profits on the entire transaction had more than been exhausted by the expense of getting me out of jail, the business men were horrified to learn that the son he had boasted about for years was so indiscreet as to pick a fight with a son of a Pristiff. We started back toward Kashoffka, but as I retold the story of my encounter with the Pristiff's heir father's sense of humor got the better of him and he never gave me all the beatings he had promised. The story reached Kashoffka by other means as soon as we did and the whole village was in a ferment when we crossed the Grabley.

I worked harder each day. The kettles of linseed were heavy and I had more and more of them to lift. In the evening I would be almost too tired to eat. It is curious that I stopped growing when I was ten years old and did not begin again until at the age of thirteen, in America, I stretched myself by hanging each day from a door frame, a trick I learned from some physical culture magazine I picked up just after I had started going to school. No one forced me to work so hard. I was driven to it by the desire

to show what I could do. Not long after my first journey to Roshist I persuaded father that I could make the trip alone, or with a workman for company, and he was glad to be able to remain at home. The first time I appeared in Roshist in charge of the load, the storekeeper to whom we sold the linseed, believing that he could cheat me because I was so small, hid some of the cakes in another part of the store and insisted that I had counted my load incorrectly.

'Count them over again,' he said, and called in another man to witness.

I saw through the trick and set out at once for the Pristiff's house, leaving our horses and wagon in front of the store. I rang the bell at the gate of the Pristiff's estate and was in the act of telling the servant that I wanted to see the official when the Pristiff himself, strolling in his garden, caught sight of me. He recognized me as the boy he had arrested a few weeks before and was very gruff at first, but I must have made a comical appearance, so much in earnest, and he listened to my story. It was unusual for such a high official to mix into a small dispute, but the Pristiff, in his best uniform, with vermilion trousers, patent leather boots, and yards of gold braid, came with me to the store. At the sight of him, a hundred yards away, the men who had tried to cheat me began to tremble and to pray. They did not dare admit they had cheated, but I pointed out the cakes the storekeeper had hidden and identified them easily because of their shape and size. Each one was just the size of our press. On another occasion, when Sam was with me, he got into a fight in a store and I jumped from the wagon seat, striking right and left with the whip, until the crowd were frightened at the thought that I must have the Devil in me.

The extreme shortness of my stature at that period was a handicap in more ways than one. A client who used to live in the neighborhood of Kashoffka came into my office about a year ago and was astonished when he was ushered in, for now I am nearly six feet tall. Once when a traveling Punch-and-Judy show had stopped in Kashoffka, that same man held me on his shoulders so I could see over the heads of the crowd. We both remembered the occasion, and I canceled my fee in return for the service he had performed in the old days.

Winter came again, and once more our establishment was the center of the village life. The blacksmith toiled on his island, the fishermen watched by their lanterns on the ice, and the peasants loitered by our fires, telling their strange tales and bursting into song when they could afford a bottle of vodka. On one of the first cold nights an incident occurred which embittered me more than ever toward my father and my stepmother. One of the most important duties of a Jewish parent in our district was to prepare bedding for their children's weddings. The children kept and cherished this bedding, taking it with them when they were married. By the quality of the bed covering, one's status in the community could be determined. The poor slept on straw or on the bare floor. Those in better circumstances had pillows and covers filled with hen feathers or other stuffing which could be secured in the village. The wealthy had bedding stuffed with down which was carefully selected from the geese. I was especially proud of my bedding, for it was filled with eiderdown, and I had, besides my pillow, one comforter to lie upon and another with which to cover myself. Mother had taken the greatest care in selecting the materials and in sewing the puffs and the pillow with her own hands.

In the middle of the night I have mentioned, I heard my stepmother complain that she was cold. She often complained about the house or the furniture. Father got up, took the cover from my bed and threw it over her. He covered me with an old coat. I said nothing at the time. In fact, I pretended to be asleep. The injustice seemed so grave that I had no heart to rebel. Bessie heard about it the next day and came running to our house in indignation, making such a scene with my stepmother that all the neighbors heard their angry voices. Feivish, as mild as he was on most occasions, rushed in and took Bessie's part. From that time on, there was little peace in the household. Quarrels broke out more frequently and resulted more bitterly. Father, caught between his new wife and the rest of us, became irascible.

It was not difficult to turn the sentiment of the village against father just then, for the Jews who had protested when I was taken out of school had by no means forgotten the incident and in speaking of it always brought up the fact that Nathan the Wise had made his money in America, where the practice of religion was considered impossible, and had brought back a host of dangerous ideas which were disrupting the village life, encouraging impiety in the young, casting ridicule upon the venerable scholars, and even causing hitherto modest young girls to walk back and forth beneath the trees with men at night. The traveling merchants were jealous of his prestige, for his travels made theirs seem unimportant. Those who had borrowed money from him were resentful of his efforts to collect the debts. Somehow, because agriculture and so many occupations have been denied them the Jews have acquired a reputation for usury which is surely not founded upon Jewish customs in the old land, for in

Volhynia and old Poland particularly, the making of loans without interest was a firmly established and generally practiced Jewish custom. In fact, since Old Testament days, a Jew who lends money to another in order to enable the latter to make a living, gets a special credit or mitzvah and by so doing improves greatly his chances in the other world. My father made countless loans of this sort to nearly every one in town, and the more money he got, the more people applied to him for funds. In the midst of it all he was gaining influence and power, for the mill his enemies had tried to forestall had more business every week. Father's desire for unusual and exotic decorations led many to believe he was putting on airs. Mother had been so thoroughly beloved by every one in the village that my stepmother was not well received, and that fact kept father somewhat on the defensive, for he was obliged to show his loyalty to his new wife.

While nothing tangible presented itself, I could feel that a storm was coming. The work grew more burdensome and my quarrels with my stepmother were frequent. Father always took her part. One day I was asked to take a setting hen from her nest. She got away from me and flew wildly around the house, breaking my stepmother's favorite vase. That started her yelling and father came in and gave me such a beating that I was unconscious for some time afterward. News of this reached the entire village and the following Saturday, when father was given the place of honor at the reading of the scroll, the elders of the synagogue advanced to the altar, clapped their hands together, and declared that father was unworthy of the honor because of his treatment of me. Before he was allowed to take part in any religious ceremony

he was forced to take oath publicly that he would not beat me nor injure me by overwork, and, rather than lose his place in the synagogue entirely, he stood before the ark and pledged himself to treat me well.

My stepmother almost went out of her head with rage when she heard what had happened, and I felt her hostility and father's resentment wherever I chanced to be. The protest in the synagogue, if it was made with a view of alleviating my condition, certainly made it worse. My only solace was to make as many trips as possible, not only to Roshist but to other towns and cities where father had business. I drove to Manievitz, north of Kashoffka, and to Melnitza, which lay southwest of us. I visited Kolk, where Morris the fiddler and the other musicians lived, and my red head and business acumen were the talk of the countryside.

Since I felt like avoiding the boys who were still going on with their studies, afraid that they would sympathize with me, and had always had few comrades among boys of my own age, I looked more and more to the horses for companionship. There was one in particular, almost an outlaw, for which I had great affection and admiration. I felt that our lots were the same. I have mentioned his name before — Dragun, the old cavalry horse which had been trained by the Cossacks. Dragun was a tall, rangy animal with a rather willful manner of holding his head and picking his way when some one was on his back. Father had bought him to pair up with another horse we already had and make a driving team. Dragun would not be driven. Both father and Sam tried every known means to break his spirit, clubbing him unmercifully, tearing his mouth with sharp bits, threatening him with fire. Nothing could be done. He would not pull a load

nor permit any one to harness him unless first he was tied so he could not move. The more father would lose his temper, the more stubborn Dragun became and finally, in a rage, father turned him out of the stable and refused to feed him any longer.

After that Dragun wandered around the village grazing on the plains as he pleased, with nothing to do and no one to bother him, but he knew where the hay and grain were kept in our stable, and whenever father was away he would open the door with his teeth or his nose, eat as much as he liked, then go out again. If, upon opening the stable door, Dragun saw father there, he would turn and run. But if I was there he would come in without fear, and I would help him get his meal before he was caught. Dragun had no objection whatever to being ridden. He was a cavalry horse, not a work horse, that was all. I do not know what put the idea into my head, but as I got better acquainted with Dragun I began to desire to persuade him to let me drive him. I worked slowly, getting his confidence bit by bit, and one day he stood still while I put the harness on him. It was a more difficult matter to teach him to pull beside another horse, for the moment the other was even with Dragun he would try to rush ahead. He thought he was being beaten in a race and pulled so hard that the other horse could not keep up with him and I could not keep the wagon on the road. It took several months, but at last I was ready to show father that Dragun would work for me. Then father and Sam tried to drive him and he was as recalcitrant as before.

One thing about Dragun which puzzled me in the beginning was that when the church bells rang at twelve o'clock, wherever he was, even in the middle of a stream,

he would stop and stand perfectly still. Until he was fed, nothing would induce him to go on. That habit was very inconvenient, for with a village only two or three miles away, I would have to stop promptly at noon and give Dragun his meal. Afterwards I realized that, like the old 'soldiers of Nicholas,' Dragun had spent his entire life in the army and had formed such rigid and regular habits that he could not vary them. The Cossacks, when they were on the march, carried grain on the back of their saddles and at twelve o'clock dismounted and fed their horses. Dragun could not understand why we were less punctual.

One night in the second winter after mother died I started about ten o'clock for the long drive to Roshist. Father had intended to go with me, but he had a bad cold, so I asked one of the workmen to go along. He was willing to go, but had been drinking vodka all evening. I thought the cold air would sober him and helped him up on the seat. The Grabley was covered with ice and where the roadway tilted to one side was very slippery. Near each bridge was a space of open water and the mill-races were still running swiftly. One of the horses started to fall and the man with me, in an effort to help the horse keep his feet, turned the wagon too far in the other direction. The wagon tipped and slid down the bank, stopping just short of the water. I was thrown clear, but the workman was pinned under the wagon. Both horses were struggling. I tried to lift the wagon to let the man out, but I could not move it. Our lantern had been smashed.

I ran back toward the village for help and noticed that in the synagogue of the Trisk Chassidim a celebration of some sort was going on. I banged at the door, but no one

heard me. It was no wonder. When Chassidim give way to a joyful mood they do it without restraint. The thud of feet on the floor and the shouts and confused songs were deafening. I pushed open the door, and the whole congregation was dancing in a circle, shoulder to shoulder, stamping their feet and substituting 'Oi, oi, oi' for the words of the song. The dust rose from the floor and streamed past the candles, which shivered from the stamping and added their smoke to the thickness of the atmosphere. Bottles of vodka stood on the tables. The stove was red-hot and sweat poured from the faces of the men, who wore heavy fur hats with skull caps underneath. Men slapped one another on the back, laughed heartily, took a drink, then joined in the general dance. I might as well have been a cricket in the wall. I saw a man I knew very well and grabbed his coat-tail, but he merely welcomed me to the feast in a genial, drunken way and nothing I could say made the slightest impression on him.

'Well, here's Hannah's son Harry!' another man shouted, lifting me up in the air. Thus he attracted the attention of others and they danced around, offering me cakes and shouting so loudly I could not make myself heard. Before I could stop them, they had wedged me into the circle and I was dancing around, involuntarily singing the tune to myself, and thinking desperately of the man lying helpless on the ice within two feet of the mill-race. Round the circle I went, while the hearty 'Oi, oi, oi' rose and fell with the cadences of the tune. I turned first to the right, then to the left, shouting that Yakele was in the water. No one paid the slightest attention. At last I saw a man in the corner putting on his boots, which had slipped off, and yelled in his ear:

THE DANCE OF THE CHASSIDIM

'Yakele's in the water!'

The man I addressed had been drinking a great deal of schnapps and to him there was something very comical in the fact that Yakele was in the water. He laughed so heartily that some of the dancers stopped to see what had amused him so. That was my chance. I stood upon the table and drove my message home. Several men grabbed lanterns and staggered toward the Grabley, some of them still singing the haunting melody to which they had danced. Fortunately Yakele was not seriously hurt and the horses, after struggling a while, had lain on their sides and waited for some one to help them. The merry Chassidim lifted up the wagon, hauled out my companion, got the horses to their feet, readjusted the harness, reloaded the wagon, and wished us the best of luck and protection from the Devil as we started on our way again. Surely, if the Chassidim are right and a lively and cheerful disposition is most pleasing to God, they will occupy a high place in the next world, and the angels will hear more spirited tunes than they have been accustomed to.

Our own house was as gloomy as the Chassidim synagogue was gay. When I returned from Roshist I found Sam and my stepmother quarreling and father in the worst kind of mood. One of his old neighbors had turned away without speaking to him as they had passed on the street. Wherever he went, men and women looked upon him with scornful glances and whispered behind his back. Before the day was over, I complained again because the cream was watered and my stepmother, in anger, cursed my mother. I lost my head completely, beating her with my fists and kicking her with my heavy boots, and father, alarmed by her screams, came in and knocked me un-

conscious with a stick of stove wood. I was in bed several days, and have never since heard so well in the ear the stove wood hit, but while I was lying there I made the decision to quit Kashoffka.

A chance for me to get away happened to present itself at once. A man named Wikos, the brother of the wife of Yankel, the ox-dealer, was a brushmaker in Odessa. He came to Kaskoffka for a visit and the news soon was whispered from house to house that he wanted to take back a boy to act as an apprentice and learn the trade. Wikos was about fifty years old and had no children of his own. Immediately several of the parents tried by various means to induce Wikos to take their sons. I approached him secretly, told him my story and begged him to let me go with him. Still, when a wealthy influential man visits a country village and has such a favor to bestow, it is never done without certain formalities and grandiloquence. One Saturday afternoon, when he was surrounded by a circle of villagers who were anxious to hear about the world beyond Kashoffka, Wikos gathered together all the boys who had been proposed to him and sent us all to the Krechma for several glasses of soda water. I covered the soda water with a saucer as I walked over the rough ground, to avoid the dust and spilling the soda, and when I approached Wikos, I put the saucer in one hand, stood the glass upon it, and offered it to him with the sort of flourish I had seen through the window of a restaurant at Roshist when a waiter had served a customer. I was chosen, for none of the other boys showed any style in carrying soda water.

Neither father nor my stepmother knew what was afoot, and I had great difficulty making preparations without their suspecting something. The most grave obstacle was

the fact that, since I was a minor, I should have had a certificate like a passport, signed by my father, in order to travel. This document was called a 'matrika' and the lack of it caused me many anxious hours. Bessie and Sam knew what I intended to do, and approved the plan, but Bessie wept continually, so that her eyes were red all day. I gathered together what clothes I had and hid them under my bedding, and, on the evening Wikos was to leave, I waited until the others were asleep and left the house on tiptoes, carrying my clothes and my pillow under my arm. These I arranged into a bundle by the light of the moon, in the center of the village I was so soon to forsake.

My feelings were so mixed that none of the elements composing them could get the upper hand. I was to see a paved road, where ruts and mud were impossible, to ride upon a railroad train and, above all, to live in that city of which it is said all over Russia, when a man is especially fortunate, that he 'lives like God in Odessa.' I was to break away from the last material reminders of my mother's love and care, except for the pillow to which I clung almost hysterically. No more days in the Cheder, reciting lessons from the Holy Law, no more Psalms in the synagogue nor quarrels in the streets I had frequented since I could walk. I wondered dimly how it would seem to pass peasants who did not know me and to be barked at by strange dogs. Then all that had been said to me about Paradise would crystallize into a conception of Odessa. Once or twice, as I hurried to Wikos's house, I looked back to see if there was a light in our place. Everything was dark. Bessie stood weeping in Wikos's doorway, an immense sack of cakes, cookies, meat, and bread ready to give me for the journey. She had let her grieved and

tender heart express itself in baking, as so many Jewish women at that time were in the habit of doing. Her tears had sizzled upon the red hot bricks of the oven. Since mother's death, my sister had been closer to me than any one else and had tried, however ineffectually, to make my lot a happier one. Sam stood silently and uncomfortably near by, as he always does when an emotional scene is enacted. Our farewells were doubly sad because Bessie and I both knew that Sam was soon to start for America.

During the long drive to Golob my state of mind reversed itself like an hourglass which was being turned one way and then the other capriciously. As our wheels ground upon the sand at the entrance to the Grabley the full force of my departure struck me and brought tears to my eyes. I huddled upon the wagon seat and sobbed as I saw the shabby houses, faintly lighted by a rising moon, the reflections upon the broad river, the mills and distant burying-ground, everything which lay in that great familiar circle which so long for me had meant the world. Thin clouds were low in the sky, the frogs and crickets were filling the night with their mysterious sounds. We passed over the three bridges, skirted the lord's garden and continued past the windmills and the cluster of houses which made up the hamlet of Silka and settled down to a steady trot toward Melnitza. As far as Melnitza, the road was familiar to me and my thoughts were wrapped up in Kashoffka. My mood was very sad. All the friendliness of our neighbors and the peasants, all the admiration and sympathy they had bestowed upon me, called me back. At times I was on the point of jumping from the wagon. I wept for each separate horse in the stable, for David the crazy with his ill-smelling clothes, for the white-haired old ruv.

On the way through Melnitza, however, I remembered that a short distance ahead, toward Golob, lay the paved road of which I had heard and thoughts of that turned my attention to the future, in which the towers and domes of Odessa, in red, bright blue, and gold, awaited my coming. The moon had dispersed the thin clouds and came out stronger. From the northwest the wind brought us the fragrance of pine forests. We struggled on, over ruts and bumps, until at last I saw the glint of moonlight upon the pavement ahead and, as our wheels began bumping over the cobblestones and the clatter of the horses' hoofs frightened the animals into a brisker trot, I marveled at the ingenuity of man, who had overcome the handicap of mud and ruts. It is true that I found riding more uncomfortable, for the cobblestones caused our wagon to rattle itself almost to pieces and once or twice I bit my tongue. Yet the fact that the paved road had turned out to be authentic gave me greater confidence that subsequent wonders would materialize in turn.

The next in turn was indeed enticing, for while I had seen a train at Roshist, I had never approached near to one nor had a chance to ride upon one. I forgot for a moment the simple people of Kashoffka, whose lives moved in such narrow circles. I laid aside my regrets that I should never again see the bright wall-snakes nor ride the pigs nor chase the chickens. Jolting along the paved road, I reached into the sack of food Bessie had given me, then remembered my manners and offered it to Wikos. He was very kind and sympathetic. I am sure he sensed my feelings about Kashoffka and tried to divert my attention by telling me about Odessa. More often, I suppose, I opened up the subject by asking a difficult question. I wanted to know how fast the train would go,

how long we should ride upon it, whether the conductor would arrest me because I had no matrika. By his expression I saw that the subject of the matrika was troubling him also. Even the German legend about Peter Schlemil, who had to wander about the earth without his shadow, having to devise new means to conceal his lack each moment, is not so terrible as what I experienced in those ensuing months because I had no matrika. Any boy with a matrika was the luckiest person in the world, I came to believe. For with a matrika one could walk right by a policeman or a Rotnik without trembling.

We arrived in Golob two or three hours before train time and although I believed Odessa would be much more splendid I could not sit still in the station. I wandered around the streets, keeping my eye on the clocks, and at last heard the shriek of the whistle. I recognized it instantly from the imitation I had heard years before from the lips of the traveler who stood upon the table. I ran to the station, found Wikos, and got ready to take the most serious plunge. All the way to Golob I had been afraid we should be overtaken and that father would take me back to Kashoffka. Once on the train, which traveled so fast no one could tell me about it, I was safe from pursuit. Only, as I came within range of the eyes of the railroad police, I felt as if my clothes were transparent and that any stranger could look through my pockets and see that no matrika was there.

On the station platform I had another disappointment which had a tremendous influence in shaping my career. But for that, I might have become the adopted son of my employer and lived my life in Odessa and Sebastopol, no doubt as proprietor of a brush factory. As the train rolled in, I saw the cars were marked first, second, and

third class, and Wikos, after finding me a place in the third class, where the seats were wooden and the smell was stale, left me to ride, himself, in the first-class car which was trimmed with upholstery and lace and in which lingered the perfume of the resplendently dressed women who sat in the spacious compartments. If he had shared the third class with me, I should not have felt slighted, but I was only a few hours from the village in which I had been considered the favorite son of the principal family. To me, the idea that the son of Hannah the Saint should be sent to a third- or even second-class carriage was heartbreaking. Since then it has occurred to me that Wikos may have been afraid to have me ride with him because I had no passport. Perhaps it was the expense, for he was a man very careful of his money. I made myself comfortable by means of the pillow mother had sewed for me and the train started off. The tremendous exhilaration of being drawn swiftly across the countryside on the way to the City of God got the best of my resentment. I never forgot it, nor did it diminish in the months which followed, but I could not be sad with so many new things to see.

As I stepped into the third-class compartment of that train, it seemed to me that I was stepping into an entirely new existence, that nothing I had learned would apply in the magic city to which I was being drawn so swiftly, that the future was like a dream beginning in such a way that it might turn in either direction and become wonderful or hideous. Thirty years later, I realized more fully that I was right in my conjecture. That moment was a turning-point. I had lived where distances were measured by the ability of a horse to travel, where life moved in a deliberate rhythm, where men were in close communion

with nature and a village was like one huge family. As the train pulled out of the shabby station at Golob and gained momentum the beat of my life was quickened and has never been permitted to slow down again. The effect of speed, moderate as it was, upon a person who had never experienced anything like it, is indescribable. I had ridden a horse at a gallop hundreds of times, but the sense of motion in that case is communicated by the efforts of the animal and gives one the feeling that it cannot last much longer, that the horse will sink to earth exhausted if it persists in trying so hard. In the train, I sat as if I were in a room. The wheels clicked over the rails with their maddening chuckle, like a meaningless syllable endlessly repeated and starting always in the middle of a word. Still there was no jar. The room moved with me, sliding along the rails, while on both sides the landscape poured swiftly back and out of sight.

I was accustomed to notice everything by the roadside, to let nothing interesting slip by. Often I would stop the horse, in driving to Roshist, in order to examine a bit of the distant landscape. In the train I was dismayed that so many things to see were flying past my eyes. I singled out a house here and there, the color of a peasant's blouse, the fluttering hand of a girl who stopped washing by a strange stream to wave her hand at me. But for everything I saw I felt there were hundreds of things I failed to see and to remember. At first that sensation filled me with dismay and confusion. Then, as there was no end to the scenery, I began to view it in larger units, to patch several gardens on a slope into a quick mosaic, to believe that girls would always linger by the side of streams to wave their hands.

Whenever I could take my mind from the landscape a

moment, it was clouded with worry. I was dreading the moment when the conductor should ask for my ticket. I had the ticket, but felt he would also insist upon the matrika. What should I say? I decided to tell him I had lost it. I was sure I should be turned over to the police at the next station and be sent back home as a prisoner, handcuffed and in disgrace. I had only a few kopeks, not even enough to offer as a bribe. The fact that I was so short made me more fearful, for I realized I looked younger than I was. My red hair made me conspicuous. Any one could identify me.

The conductor, when he came, was very jolly. He punched my ticket, and spoke a few words in Russian which I was afraid to answer in Chachlatski for fear of disclosing that I was from the country. I had noticed that in Golob the boys had stopped to look at me as I passed them on the street and had laughed at my clothes and the way in which I stared at the buildings. As soon as the conductor was out of sight, my spirits rose and I turned my full attention to the rolling lands which whisked past the windows. As the train sped down grade I liked the feeling of its momentum and power. I tried to remember how the engine had looked as it puffed and snorted into the station, the steam hissing from the cylinders and the piston rod driving on with a force which made the oxen, the water wheels and windmills seem insignificant and crude, indeed. I felt insignificant, too, about the size of a pea. My feet would not touch the floor and so I kept slipping forward in the seat. Now and then I thought of Wikos, stretched comfortably on the cushions in the first class. As night fell, I was more and more resentful, but the long eventful day had tired me and I spread out on the seat, for the compartment was

not at all crowded, and let my head sink into the familiar pillow, taking comfort from the fact that mother's hands had touched it. As I went to sleep, I remembered that she said she would continue to watch over me. Whatever may be the relationship between the dead and the living, the memory of those words for many years has had the effect of fulfilling mother's promise.

The excitement of preparing for my journey had kept me wakeful for several nights previously and during the long drive I had not been able to sleep a wink, so I sank quickly into a deep slumber that first night on the train and was awakened by the grinding and squealing of brakes. I could feel the tremendous power of the train holding back, holding back, instead of urging on ahead. We were pulling into a station. I jumped up from the bench and ran to the window on the other side of the car. A sign passed just too late for me to read it, then I saw another. It was the city the name of which I do not remember. When I stepped eagerly to the platform, having asked the train guard at least a dozen times how long we should stop there, the city was peaceful enough, but how strange! I saw different types of Russians from those I had seen before, dressed in the style peculiar to their respective provinces. It was like looking at a colored page in an atlas or encyclopædia. Dozens of people poured forth from the doors of the compartments of our train, and near me a group consisting of one small meek man, a very fat woman carrying a basket of chickens, and two girls with their hair in braids down their backs, stood a moment forlornly on the platform, then were descended upon by a swarm of eager relatives. The kissing and hugging and terms of endearment with which my traveling companions were showered dumbfounded me. The

men and women screamed, kissed for the tenth time, slapped one another on the knees or the buttocks, danced and squealed with joy. Such a demonstration would have been unthinkable in Kashoffka. As I have said, my mother and father shook hands rather embarrassedly after his four years absence in America. I became involved in the tumult of welcome, feeling a vicarious glow, when I heard the whistle blow and the conductor tooted his little horn. I made a dive for the compartment which contained my few articles and, as we got under way again, glanced wistfully at the houses and streets and droshkys and the swarms of people I had not had time to observe.

This time, as I turned my attention to the landscape, it indeed had a foreign flavor. The foliage in the gardens had strange colors; the vineyards on the sunny slopes bewildered me until I inquired what they were. The country was more hilly than I had ever seen, so that the view was shut off capriciously by the walls of steep cuts, then long vistas were as suddenly opened up as the train emerged and I found myself looking down into a ravine, with a stream like a chalk line, hundreds of yards below. The peasants I saw were short and sturdy, with garnet and emerald-green embroidery on the sleeves and skirts of the women.

One of my fellow passengers told me we were soon to reach Stanchy-Kazatin, one of the largest and most beautiful railroad stations in all Russia. I could tell by the closer spacing of houses and gardens when we were approaching the city. There we were to stop thirty minutes, so I was anxious to see as much as possible of the place. The crowd in the station was the largest I had seen, and strange in dress, manners, and appearance. I did not wait to watch the people squeal and kiss one another, but

walked straight through the station to where dozens of cabs and droshkys were lined up on the pavement, each driver with a whip in his hand and a queer hat on his head, gesticulating and arguing with the passengers who came out. For each passenger there were several droshkys and a din arose as the drivers tried to get the best of their competitors. The successful ones started out, the wheels rumbling over the stones and the whip crackling. There were other passengers from the first class who were met in carriages such as the ox merchants had described, with plush upholstery, gilded decorations, and elaborate carvings. The horses wore harnesses on which silver or brass buckles shone.

Then I felt eyes upon me. A police officer was standing near by, but not the kind of officer I had seen before. This one wore a red uniform with silver braid, with a pistol in a holster at his belt and a saber slung in a long sheath. I learned later that the officer belonged to a special Government force which guarded the railroads. In order to get out of his sight, I backed into the station again and found myself near the buffet. There I saw a sight which made me forget even my fear of the officer. A samovar stood upon the counter, but a samovar larger than all of ours combined. It was twice as tall as I and in its polished surface was reflected the moving crowds in the station, so that it swirled and changed colors like the river surface on a bright but cloudy day. I looked at my own reflection, much elongated, and wished I really were as tall as I appeared. What puzzled me most was the steam. Bearing in mind my former attempts to improve methods for heating our own samovars, my curiosity on this point will easily be understood. I could not see all the mechanism, for it was hidden behind the

counter, but I edged around, from corner to corner, trying to find a point of vantage from which I could inspect the fueling arrangements of this monster samovar. I was sure it must be the largest in the world. I was curious to taste its tea to see if it was like ours. Timidly, after reading the price list, I asked for a glass. Suddenly I heard a whistle and ran in panic for the train, abandoning the tea, which the bewildered waitress offered me. In my confusion I got into a baggage room where the door leading to the tracks was locked. I ducked between the legs of a railroad employee who came to ask me what I was doing there, made another false start, and, before I could get to the platform, my train started moving, the doors were banged shut, and I stood there, choking with sobs and half blinded by tears, watching the rear of the train slide mockingly down the tracks.

I have never had such a sudden moment of grief and abandon. My only chance was gone. Even my few clothes and the pillow my mother had given me were speeding away in that train. Neither had I a ticket, for I had given mine to Wikos, afraid that I might by some evil chance lose it. My employer and protector, of course, was in the first-class compartment, blissfully unaware that his apprentice had been left behind. I saw no prospects of getting in touch with him again, of reaching Odessa, of ever seeing a familiar or friendly face again. My spirits sank still lower when I realized that the police officer in red, with pistol and saber, had been watching me cry and was coming toward me. I should have run away if he had not been exactly between me and the door, but when he spoke to me, in spite of my terror, it began to dawn on me that his words had no reference to a matrika. He merely wanted to know why I was cry-

ing. His friendly tone brought forth the statement of all my troubles. I told him I had missed the train, that my uncle had my ticket and was in the first class, that I had no money and no friends in Stanchy-Kazatin. He took me by the hand and led me to the station-master. They began discussing what could be done for me, comforting me with the news that another train would be going to Odessa in six or eight hours and that they could telegraph ahead to the station-master there and get word to my uncle. I had said hastily that Wikos was my uncle, so it would not appear strange that I was traveling with him. Now I was terrified, for he would not report the loss of a nephew but of an apprentice and the inconsistency of our stories would arouse suspicion. However, while the officer and the station agent were talking, we heard a tremendous noise like a thunder-clap, a man disheveled and out of breath came running in and at his first words, which I did not catch because of my unfamiliarity with pure Russian, both station-master and policeman turned as white as ghosts and started running as fast as their legs would carry them. All the other employees and occupants of the station did likewise, leaving me standing there, alone, forlorn and amazed, in the largest railroad station in all Russia.

The train I had missed had been wrecked. Revolutionists had dynamited it about a mile from Kazatin, several cars had been blown into splinters, many men and women had been killed, one of the men a high official, dozens were wounded. Police and soldiers ran here and there, the crowd streamed out along the track. I followed. A matrika more or less, with the world tumbling about my ears, no longer deterred me.

That was the first time I had heard the word 'revolution,' but soon afterward, in Sebastopol, among the workmen with whom my new work placed me, I heard little else, once they were convinced I was not likely to repeat what was said nor to be pumped for information by the police or our employer. As I have explained, in Kashoffka the Government was remote and vague. It seldom showed itself and no one dreamed of questioning or overthrowing it. All the efforts among the Jews were concentrated upon the evasion of military service with its consequent irreligious practices.

When I reached the scene of the wreck, the dead bodies had been covered and the injured were being rushed back to hospitals in Kazatin. The splintered coaches had been removed from the tracks and what was left of the train was being assembled, to be pulled back to the station by a switching engine. I found Wikos weak and bleeding, wringing his hands. He had been searching the crowds for me and, although the coach in which I had been riding had not been demolished, he believed that I must have strayed into another car and that I had been killed or hurt. We had a fervent reunion, and as soon as our relief had been expressed I begged him to give me back my ticket. We walked back to Kazatin together and drank several glasses of tea at the counter where stood the gigantic samovar. This time I kept one eye glued upon the tracks and at the faintest suggestion of a whistle or a horn rushed to the platform. After several hours, during which all strangers in the vicinity of the station were collared by the police and taken to the station for questioning, our train was ready to start out again. An announcer with a tremendous voice bellowed through the station. Meanwhile soldiers had come from everywhere. They paced up and down the streets,

crowded the waiting-rooms, lined the tracks on both sides. I saw uniforms of all colors and officers strutting here and there indignantly. It went hard with any suspicious characters who got into their clutches. Each soldier and policeman felt the death of the high official as a personal reflection upon his own efficiency and redoubled his watchfulness. How transparent I felt again, without my matrika. I knew Wikos was afraid, for the station-master knew we were traveling together and my lack of papers would cast suspicion upon him. However, when the train pulled in, we climbed into our respective compartments and I counted over all my possessions, reassured at finding them untouched.

Once out of the city the sudden awareness of a tremendous conflict between police and revolutionists was forgotten for a time. The scenery and the strange people in the fields and by the roadsides absorbed all my attention. In the course of the journey we passed through Ukrania, where the peasants were short and stocky; through districts inhabited by Poles as tall as the Ukranians were short. In Little Russia, the colors were brighter everywhere. Blouses and caps were trimmed with astonishing hues, girls had thicker and longer braids and wore garlands in their hair. Life seemed bubbling all around. Even the streams cascaded swiftly over the rocks and the horses stepped higher and more briskly as they drew the wagons or droshkys. The houses were of different design, thatched with fine smooth straw and decorated with leaves. White posts lined the railroad and between them were strung glistening wires over which, I had been told, messages were humming from city to city. The insulators were of porcelain, and looked like the eyes of huge bugs which glared at the passing train. Around

the stations through which we passed without stopping, men were dressed in store clothes.

As I rode along, I thought about the revolutionists who wanted to blow up the Tsar's messenger, even the Tsar himself. I could not find a reason why such a great man should be molested. I conceived revolution as a new and terrible power, like steam, and of revolutionists as demons who must inhabit dark places and fly through the air at night like goats with wings. Each time the wheels clicked extra loudly, as we passed over an imperfect rail joint or a switch, I trembled, expecting an explosion to follow. All along the line, I saw soldiers at regular intervals, pacing beside the tracks, meeting one another, turning squarely on their heels, then marching again. I felt older than when I had entered the Kazatin station. Danger had threatened me. My escape had been miraculous. At the time I attributed it to the spirit of my mother, watching over me. I was sure she had kept me from boarding that train at the wrong time.

My visions of what Odessa must be were so extravagant that when we entered the suburbs and I saw real houses and streets I was disappointed for a moment, but not for long. Gaunt groups of factory chimneys shot up into the air, tangled clusters of masts and smokestacks hovered around the wharves at the waterfront. I smelled the sea through the open window and saw an expanse of water more vast than the land. The domes and pillars of the cathedrals were, indeed, vermilion and blue and gold. Naval officers more resplendent than the army officers or the Cossacks strode through the streets, which were unbelievably broad and swept as clean as a floor on the eve of Passover. Proud horses drew fine carriages through the squares; men and women, immaculately dressed,

bowed and spoke to one another as they passed. Settees were placed beneath the trees, there were bootblacks who worked and whistled. I saw swarms of Russian sailors in their tufted caps, many of them in white blouses and trousers which were stiffly starched and clean. Among the crowds I kept seeing men who looked like pictures of the Tsar and only with difficulty restrained myself from asking if the Tsar were really there. The streets were shaded by magnificent trees and the parks filled with shrubs and flowers. Every one was happy and busy as we drove from the station toward the hotel. I had never seen a hotel and was excited at the prospect. After driving a half-hour, our cab was stopped short by a policeman. I heard shouts and shrill whistles. The driver quickly jumped down and turned his horse around. The street was blocked, men and women ran to and fro on the sidewalk. Every one was pale and terrified.

As the cab turned, I caught a glimpse of a side-street and saw a crowd of men, evidently Jews, running in a body toward a goal I could not see. They were all dressed in blood-stained aprons and had long knives in their hands. Wikos said at once that they were butchers. From another direction came a mob of Russian laborers with long hair and canvas blouses, bearing spades, clubs and guns in their hands. The Jewish butchers, cornered in an alley, turned around to fight and I saw the knives gleam, the clubs swinging, men fall and bleed, others run. The police stood calmly at their posts, as if the affair was none of their business. Wikos, trembling and damp with sweat, cowered in the cab, trying to hide himself. Our driver, knowing Wikos was a Jew, was more afraid than my employer and crossed himself continually. At last the butchers seemed to gain the upper hand and

A POGROM

forced back the mob. The shouts and cries came nearer. Just then a cavalry officer rode down the alley and gave an order to the police. The streets were cleared, leaving men lying in grotesque attitudes on the pavement.

The fight had occurred about one hundred yards from our cab, so that I could see and hear all too plainly. I could not understand it. I had dimly heard of a pogrom, but in Kashoffka, where Jews and peasants nursed one another during illness and lent one another firewood in winter, I had assumed that massacres of Jews were incidents far back in history, like the escape from the Egyptians and the burning of the temple of Solomon. Wikos was too shaken to explain. I knew that he was against the revolutionists, for he had called them bats and murderers after the train was blown up. Soon I gathered that he considered it outrageous that the police should allow the long-haired workmen to kill the Jews. The officials had only interfered when the victory of the butchers was certain.

My initiation into political and religious disputes was too sudden. I could not feel the force of what I had witnessed, but before I left Odessa I learned that the city was at that time (it was the early nineteen hundreds) the scene of frequent clashes between the unskilled laborers from the Russian villages, who earned small wages and were often out of work, and the Jewish shopkeepers or skilled workmen. The Tsar, I was told, wanted to exterminate us and had given orders that mobs should not be restrained too much from looting Jewish stores or injuring Jewish inhabitants. In Odessa several bands of young Jews had organized themselves into bands of defense, the most prominent being the butchers I had seen in action. When the alarm of a pogrom was sounded, they

met by prearrangement, long knives in their hands, and fought for their own lives and the lives of their co-religionists. Some of my new acquaintances said the priests were at the bottom of the trouble, others who had become Socialists told me that economic jealousy was the cause of the trouble. All those terms meant little to me, but I was anxious to understand them, if for no other reason than to know what new menaces threatened me in the city.

Several of the Russian workmen who had taken part in the pogrom I witnessed were brought before the court, but so also were the Jewish butchers who had defended themselves. The sentences, imposed indiscriminately upon the participants on either side, ranged from a small fine to three months' imprisonment for 'disturbing the peace.' Two years later, just about the time I arrived in Portland, Maine, the defense societies were formally forbidden by the Russian Government, which suspected the Jews of revolutionary tendencies and feared that a secret military organization would grow up.

During the few days I remained at Odessa this new knowledge pressed upon me like a weight. I lost for the time my inquisitiveness, for it seemed as if always there was a storm in the air. I remembered having the same feelings once when I was waiting for a thunderstorm to break, in the tremendous barn on the lord's estate across the river from Kashoffka. Odessa no longer was a Paradise.

After my eventful journey in which I had experienced so much, and the pogrom with which I was greeted in the City of God, one might have thought that I should have a peaceful evening. Unhappily, I did not. Soon after we arrived at the hotel, Wikos left me alone to attend to some business and I began to feel an urge of nature. I have tried to indicate as delicately as I could the very primitive sanitary arrangements in Kashoffka. Naturally I knew of no others. A casual glance, however, at the back yard of the Odessa hotel convinced me that things must be otherwise in the city. Timidly I asked a man who acted as man-of-all-work and janitor of the hotel and he pointed out the water-closet to me. At home, since mother died, I had grown a bit careless about dress and habitually kept my trousers up by means of a rope. On the night of my departure, however, Sam, knowing that it was likely we should never meet again, gave me one of his leather belts with a metal buckle as a traveling present. I was very proud of it and cherished it besides for sentimental reasons. Now, somehow, that belt fell into the hopper and in trying to get it out I accidentally pulled a chain which showered the whole business with water and sent my belt scurrying farther down the drain-pipe. I was overwhelmed with grief and confusion. I barred the door and, half sick from the strong smell of carbolic, pried and fumbled miserably to recover what I had lost, suffering horribly meanwhile because of the delay. Finally I unscrewed something which should have remained tight and flooded the whole place. The janitor and proprietor came running, but the water oozed out all over the floor and ran down the corridor, and no one could seem to stop it. Wikos arrived in the midst of it all and, tired and careworn from the long trip and the terror resulting from the street fight, took out his temper upon me. The janitor, for whom I had made no end of work, joined in with the broom handle. The proprietor got in a perfunctory kick or two. I began to hate Odessa thoroughly and to feel a twinge of that distaste for modern conveniences which Schloime Gimbel, the Framingham junk man, has retained through thirty-five years in America.

I had understood that Wikos's place of business was in Odessa, but on the train I learned that he had abandoned his Odessa factory for a larger one in Sebastopol. He had intended leaving me in Odessa, as apprentice to his successor there, with whom he kept up a business connection, but my talent for getting into trouble convinced him that I would probably cause his associate to be hanged. So, after trouncing me to the rhythm of the overflowing water-closet, he told me that I was a yokel from the country and frightened me further by hinting that he might not take me with him to Sebastopol. He relented, however, and we set out for the boat the next evening at sundown, for a night's voyage on the Black Sea.

All the intervening day I roamed the streets of the City of God, peeping through the twigs of the hedges which bordered the large residential estates, admiring the accouterments of the military and naval officers who transformed the streets into a colored pageant, talking to the proud horses which stood impatiently before broad doorways, watching the janitors on the avenues rush out with brooms and shovels the moment a bit of dirt or refuse lit upon the section of the pavement in front of their place of employment. That was the way the streets were kept so clean. In my ramblings I had a moment of intense joy, a warm, spontaneous feeling which left me with a certain sense of security. I met a girl from Kashoffka on the edge of one of the parks. She had journeyed to Odessa a few months before to work in a shop there. Lena was one of the handsomest girls in our town, with black hair, dark eyes exquisitely shaped, a complexion of ivory which was tinged with rose in her cheeks. To-day, the mother of two boys, one studying at Harvard, the other in an art school, she is not less handsome and I have many opportunities to

confirm that statement, since she is now my sister-in-law. We talked mostly of Sam, for she and my brother had shown a marked preference for one another.

Lena's father was one of the kindest men I remember in the village, and surely one of the most solicitous for his family. Her mother had a yearning for books and society and all the things Kashoffka did not offer. The family, beguiled by one of the landowners just outside the village, purchased a farm, contrary to law, using the name of the vendor, whom they trusted. For years, when Lena and her sisters were small, they all lived on the farm and her father made a good living by raising garden truck and fruit. He was considered lucky and he considered himself in that light, for no one whose father and grandfathers have not been denied the right to till the soil can appreciate the exhilaration Lena's father felt as the smell of rich loam followed the course of his plow. Before long, things turned badly for the man in whose name the property technically rested, and the family was dispossessed without ceremony, under threat of arrest and expulsion for having evaded the law. They moved to a small house in Kashoffka and the father became an egg merchant, driving or even walking from town to town to collect eggs and resell them to the inhabitants who had no chickens. Lena had a longing for a more abundant life and found an opportunity to go to Odessa. It was there I told her that Sam was going to America, and it must have meant much more to her than I realized, for I believe they had an understanding that he should send for her. At any rate, she came of her own accord some years later and landed at Philadelphia. Sam, then in Chelsea, Massachusetts, arranged a meeting and they were married.

In that chance fashion, wanderers, friends, and lovers

received and exchanged their messages in the old days. Letter-writing was quite uncommon, for no one believed that a message dropped into a box would reach its destination a hundred or two thousand miles away. Faith in the mails requires the sort of imagination that only traveling will develop. Sam was one of the worst hands at writing letters who ever made the trip across the Atlantic, as I will soon disclose.

I cannot help dwelling upon that moment in the park, when I saw a familiar face coming toward me, and such a lovely face. Years later, in a cheap motion-picture theater one evening, when I was indulging myself in entertainment after a successful day selling papers, a man came out between pictures and sang a song the words of which went something like this:

'Gee, it's great to meet a pal from your own home town.'

I thought of my meeting with Lena in Odessa and tears came to my eyes. I was not sufficiently acquainted with the nuances of the American language at that time to be aware of the bathos of the words, but took them in the naïve spirit which characterizes Russian folk songs. The justness of the sentiment made the melody seem touching as well.

Wikos and I arrived at the dock a full hour before the boat was due to start for Sebastopol. This was mostly due to my anxiety to see a boat, for I had heard so much about a house sailing on the water. Having missed one conveyance I was resolved never to be late for another. I stood on deck watching stevedores, bare to the waist, struggling up the gangplank with heavy bundles or boxes on their heads. The smell of tar and seaweed intoxicated me. All around were craft of every description, small

fishing boats with colored sails, schooners laden with bales of tea, coal scows, tugs, and farther out in the harbor lay a squadron of cruisers, lean and gray, lying low in the water. Various flags flew from the mastheads, numerous languages were shouted back and forth as sailors climbed nimbly on the spars or hauled at the rigging. Before me, as if the deck were a platform, the city of Odessa was spread, its tidy roofs in ranks. Low hills bulged beneath the residences on the outskirts, smoke poured from factory chimneys, men scurried here and there, women peddled apples, Turks, Cossacks, tourists in German clothes, mingled with the naval officers and the uniformed soldiers and sailors. Priests shuffled along in sandals, Jews wore derby hats. Over it all — the buildings, trees, and the moving crowds — the horizontal rays of the sun searched out windows and harness buckles and fountains to kindle them. After an interminable time a giant whistle boomed behind me, scaring me almost to faintness. The gangplank was hauled up by shouting sailors. The wharf began to edge away. Odessa was slipping back, ever so slowly, resplendent in the twilight glow, its domes and towers alight, its activities retarding in the evening calm. The water was smooth and oily and our vessel nosed its way among the smaller and larger craft, while bells clanged and whistles tooted. It was dark before I remembered the lunch I was carrying in my blouse.

I am not sure whether I slept that night, for the sea grew rough and many of the passengers, even the sailors, were seasick. My bunk tossed and shifted and I had difficulty staying in it, but at daybreak I was able to go on deck. In the morning the process of the evening was reversed. First the sea, then the scattered fishing fleet, the tugs and barges and the awakening water-front, with

Sebastopol, faster and more impressive than Odessa, spread out upon the hills. I saw one landing, with pillars and broad stone steps, decorated with flags and bunting in the Russian national colors.

'That is used by the Tsar,' a passenger told me. 'Only the Tsar, his family, and his staff go up those steps.'

Facing the Tsar's landing was a broad avenue, with two files of trees on each side. I saw a great square with a huge statue in the middle. Wikos joined me, looking pale and worn. He was as bad a sailor as Sam was a letter-writer. I was the first passenger down the gangplank.

Our entry into Sebastopol was more auspicious than our greeting at Odessa had been. The first person I saw, when we reached the Wikos home and the adjoining brush factory, was a boy with whom I had gone to Hebrew school. It was the son of the Soifer, who used to write the scrolls. He was a few years older than I, but a good companion. Every one welcomed me heartily. After a day of sight-seeing, I returned to find the table spread for a gala meal and was invited to sit down. There were tomatoes, which I had never seen before; cantaloupe, which I mistook for a kind of pumpkin at first; watermelon, which was such a delicacy at Kashoffka that we never had it more than once a year. When a delicacy called Kotletin, made of chopped meat and seasoned with garlic, was brought on, I began to believe that one feasted every day in the city and that folks spent their money like water. I felt like a lord. The wine and brandy made every one merry. We sang and ate and talked until after the usual bedtime. Then I had another come-down, for I was shown a splintered board floor in one of the sheds for a bedroom. Other apprentices and workmen were snoring in various corners. While Kashoffka had never been

luxurious, I had had a bed to sleep on. I spent a wakeful and miserable night, for not only was I disappointed, but I could not bear to put my mother's pillow on the floor.

The next day I started work in the factory. Besides the house and the factory, Wikos owned and operated a shop which faced on the main street, the broad thoroughfare which had attracted my attention as the boat pulled in. I learned it was the Nachimoffsky Ulitza, named for the great general who took Sebastopol from the Turks. The factory, back of the shop, faced the other way, toward the Black Sea. There was a high fence all around and a courtyard between the buildings. Just outside our wall, toward the market and the sea, was a vacant untidy space where tramps and stevedores slept on the ground. The market was filled with all sorts of strange people, one section being entirely Turkish, where the proprietors of the booth squatted on mats in front of their wares, smoking pipes in which the smoke was drawn through a gourd filled with water.

The contract I had made, which seemed so marvelous and advantageous to me at Kashoffka, may not appear so to others. I had pledged to work for four years without pay, receiving only an allowance of ten roubles yearly for clothing. The work to which a green apprentice was put could scarcely be more disagreeable or revolting, for some of the brushes were made from horsehair and the hair of various other animals. This was delivered in cartloads at our back entrance, clinging to bits of skin and flesh which, in decaying, had an odor like all possible stenches in the world stirred together. I spent the first several days sorting and scraping those reeking hides, but all the time I was looking around me to find ways and means for promotion to the more agreeable tasks. What I

liked best was running errands. I could read and write, I found my way from place to place easily by asking questions. In order to encourage the boss to send me, I would run at full speed through the streets and return so quickly that he would be astonished. When a fare of three kopeks was given me I walked or ran and returned the fare. After the first evening, the meals were by no means up to holiday standard. Meat was tough, bread was coarse and hard. I found an old sack which I filled with staw for a mattress. I made a few extra kopeks from tips — as part of my work I shined the shoes for the boss and his family, sweeping, working overtime to complete rush orders. The clothes I had brought with me were not suitable for the work, but the Soifer's son gave me an old blouse.

Each morning, one boy was selected to go to the market with Wikos's wife and carry the basket for her. It soon came my turn and she was pleased with the way I served her and asked that the marketing be made a regular part of my duties. This aroused some jealousy among the apprentices, but it gave me a chance to see the sights of the market-place. My mistress shopped and bargained carefully and slowly. Before the basket got so heavy that my arms and shoulders ached, I watched the busy market people and their customers, learned to distinguish the different nationalities of people by the color and cut of their clothes, became familiar with all the meats, vegetables, fruits, and fabrics unknown in my native village.

We all worked from sunrise to sunset, so when the weather was most agreeable we were confined for a longer term of hours. In winter we had more time for recreation. The weather was warm.

In Kashoffka I had seen only the fresh-water fish, so

the Sebastopol fish market was like an enchanted grotto for me. I saw not only the huge and often grotesque sea-creatures laid out for sale, reflecting every color of the rainbow and showing expressions of disgust, discouragement, distrust, or resignation in their unchanging eyes, but the multifarious snails, sculpins, sea-horses, sea-urchins and anemones, skates, sharks, and dolphins which became entangled in the nets and were brought ashore as curiosities. Not far from the fish market were the Turkish cafés, where dark, black-haired men in fezzes and wide spacious trousers sipped coffee or smoked their gourd pipes by the hour. I admired and envied the leisurely way in which the Turks lived their lives. The wealthy ones were coal merchants, but I never discovered when they did their business. At all hours of the day, when I was running errands, I saw them sitting on mats or in the cafés, smoking, letting a strange word drop from their lips once or twice each afternoon, half closing their eyes as if in perpetual reverie.

If the wind was blowing from the sea, evenings after work was done I could hear the gnawing, insistent music from the Turkish quarter, muffled and monotonous. After a while it became almost necessary to me, as it was to them, like air or thin blue tobacco smoke. Usually two musicians played, one beating a small drum or tomtom with a padded stick, the other improvising melodies upon a shrill wooden instrument like a clarinet, but much more weird. What struck me at first was that the melodies would stop at such unexpected times, then continue after a measured pause. I went to sleep many nights to the tune of the Turkish music.

Now and then I saw Turkish women, as the doors of their houses were opened. They seldom came out on the

street and if they did were heavily veiled. Wikos's wife often stopped at the Turkish bakery for fancy loaves of bread and pastry. I had a special interest in the marketing for what we bought in the morning I helped eat in the evening. There were eight employees of the factory, Wikos, and his wife at table. The only servant was a cook.

Wikos was kind to me, nearly always, but one day as I was shining his shoes I got blacking on the rim of his trousers and he gave me a cuff over the head. I told him I was in the wrong and that I held no resentment on account of his having slapped me, since I could only learn by being corrected. In fact, I made quite a speech, with my face burning from the slap, and I felt quite virtuous about what I was saying, but nearly two years later, when Wikos tried to induce me to let him adopt me, one of the things which kept me from accepting his offer was that slap for which I had thanked him. Such is forgiveness.

I was soon promoted from scraping the hides to boring holes in the brush handles. This was much cleaner work, and the prevailing smell was of wood, a welcome change. The most difficult operation was putting the hair into the holes. Soon after I began working, Wikos hired the champion brushmaker of Odessa. He could fill more than three thousand holes a day. I sat near the champion, and was surprised to notice that he took his work very easily and made few motions. Most of the others, especially when the boss was looking, made their elbows fly and exaggerated their gestures. I was able, after a while, to fill two thousand holes a day and by so doing forfeited my daily stroll in the market, for my work in the factory was then considered too valuable to be lost. I was not reluctant to relinquish the marketing, for the basket was

heavy and I learned that I was taken along only in order to save paying twenty kopeks to a Turk. Several Turks of the poorer class hung around the markets and picked up an occasional coin by portering.

The boss was out of the room most of the time, and when it was known that he was at a safe distance discussions were carried on which were not for his ears. I took no part at first, except to ask the meaning of words I did not know, but I soon caught on to the fact that each one of my fellow workmen, including the champion brushmaker, was a Socialist and eager for the revolution: at least, hopeful for its success. They spoke so earnestly about the rights of the workers, the injustices perpetrated by the Government, the greed of the rich, that I was soundly impressed. The Soifer's son — may his soul rest in peace, for he was cut down by the Cossacks in 1905 — had been converted to socialism and explained its doctrine to me privately. I was very much excited, especially when I found out that to be a Socialist was to have a price on one's head. The bands of workers in the various factories throughout Sebastopol had secret means of communication, kept in touch with one another, held underground meetings. I was told this in the beginning, but soon I had ample tangible evidence. A strange man entered the shop to buy brushes, and instead of buying several at a time he returned each day to select another. Like magic all socialistic conversation ceased. My companions had recognized a member of the secret police. We all might be hanged or whipped to death. No such danger could exist in a socialistic state, I was told in whispers.

I was really too young to be considered much of a revolutionist, and so my fellow workers were content for a

while to have me take the first step in the making of a rebel, that is, to go to school. The school, to my great surprise, was not like the Cheder at home, on the way to which one walked through the streets in broad daylight and carried along an appetizing lunch. The school to which I was escorted, after a hundred vows of secrecy, was reached by entering a doorway twice removed from the building. I was cautioned never to enter when I was observed, not to come at exactly the same hour each Sunday, and always to come alone. I was led through the first building into a narrow alley at the back and into a slanting cellar door which showed no light inside. The schoolroom was below the level of the street and so situated that little or no sound escaped, even when songs were sung. I heard of the many men, women, and children who had been sent to Siberia with chains on their ankles for being indiscreet about their schooling. Some of the new songs I learned were in their honor.

My education was not all political, however. Upon entering the room I saw above the doorway a picture of several men's heads, side by side. The teacher explained that each one represented a race, that the people on earth were divided into Caucasians, Mongolians, Negroes, and so forth. I had seen several black men on the streets of Sebastopol and at first had thought they were covered with coal dust or dressed for a play. I had never been to a theater, but on Purim evening in Kashoffka the young Talmud students would enact plays in which boys I knew, looking like scarecrows, took the part of the Recording Angel or the Examining Angel. It was with great surprise that I learned about the divers races and that there was a continent inhabited by black men and another peopled with yellow men. There was a globe in the

corner, and I turned it round and round until I found Boston, where my father had been. I was disappointed, for Boston was only an unimportant-looking little dot, spelled in less than medium-sized letters. I could not reconcile that dot with father's descriptions of the city. In a humbler way I repeated one of the moving experiences of Copernicus, for I discovered then and there that the earth was round. Often in the orthodox Jewish communities tutors or teachers would be hired to teach grammar with the express understanding that they should not put the notion into the children's heads that the earth was a sphere, or that it moved around the sun.

Our songs were often improvised in the classroom. One I remember had to do with the building of a cruiser in the Sebastopol Harbor and ended with a complaint that when it was completed the workmen would be turned away to shift for themselves, while the Government official would take to drink and revelry. How different were these songs from those composed by the peasants of Kashoffka, about the gray ox or the rainy day! Not less musical, perhaps, but in a new spirit.

Before twelve months of my apprenticeship had passed, I had advanced myself to a place of trust. Wikos was such a poor sailor, sure to turn green with nausea before the vessel got fairly started, that I was sent several times to Odessa to purchase materials. Because I was good at writing and arithmetic, I handled much of the correspondence at my employer's dictation. Wikos stood well with the naval officers, having bribed several officials, and got large orders for brushes to be used on the battleships. At our mill in Kashoffka we used a wire brush for combing wool, and I suggested to Wikos that he substitute wire for horsehair in brushes to be used for rough work aboard

ship. He tried it and found the new type to be much more durable and cheaper. I was sent aboard one of the battleships to demonstrate the brush and Wikos received large orders afterward. I became the favorite and some of the other apprentices were hostile to me and accused me of spying. I got into a fight with one of them and found the tactics I had used at Kashoffka quite useless. In Sebastopol the boys fought scientifically, so I had to learn all over again.

Wikos soon gave me an opportunity to tend the shop evenings, when he wanted to leave the place, and I made good sales. Just as the peasants in the village had asked to have me press out their linseed, the customers in Sebastopol asked to have me wait on them and make deliveries. In this way I entered some of the fine residences and got acquainted with officials and wealthy business men. One of the customers who was kind to me was a retired Russian admiral, a distant relative of the Tsar. He had a palatial home with a walled garden in which I often saw his daughter strolling. Two very fierce dogs guarded the place and the dogs got to know me, so that I could enter without their barking. I began to be intoxicated with city life and to desire nothing better than to occupy a high position in Odessa or Sebastopol. My taste of luxury in the wealthy men's houses induced me one Sunday to enter a large cathedral. How many of my old neighbors would have prayed and trembled all day if they had known it! The profusely decorated altar, the gilded ikons and tall tapers, the stained glass and tremendous choir dazzled and delighted me. I hurried from the cathedral to our underground school.

Neither Wikos nor his wife, who began discussing with one another the question of adopting me as a son,

broached the subject directly to me at that time. Our nearest neighbor, a jeweler and friend of the family, was used as an ambassador. He made a practice of coming into the shop on the evenings I was on duty there and he kept mentioning to me that my employer was a good man and a rich man; that he had no children to say kaddish for him or to inherit his business and his wealth; that Sebastopol was an important and beautiful city, one of the finest in Russia. I agreed to everything he said, not understanding its full import with regard to me.

Other means used by Wikos to bring me into his family were more unpleasant for me. In spite of the fact that I worked hard each day and spent every spare moment exploring the city or improving my education, I was very lonesome. Sam had gone to America, according to Bessie's letters, and this knowledge caused a strange shift in my affections. All my life my sister had seemed the closer to me. She was kind and generous, always sympathetic. Sam, annoyed sometimes by my questions or my unintentional interference with his love affairs, had beaten me. In Kashoffka he had had little else to do with me, unless we were working together. He detested work and I enjoyed it, so there was continual friction. In Sebastopol, however, I missed Sam more than any one else. I scanned each letter from Bessie for news of him, and it was scarce. Once or twice he wrote me directly and I was elated for days afterward. There was something about the American stamps that fascinated me.

Wikos's wife, realizing that the letters from my relatives meant so much to me, was afraid they would influence me against remaining in Sebastopol, so she intercepted my letters and destroyed them. Weeks passed and I received not a single word. Then a letter got through,

somehow, and Bessie's words were surcharged with anxiety about Sam. She had had no news from him for a long time and communicated to me her fear that he was sick, or even dead. One night after that, when I was sweeping the store, I found torn pieces of a letter and recognized the paper and handwriting. It was from Bessie, and I had never read it. In that way, by chance, I discovered what Wikos's wife was doing, but I dared make no complaint. I took the few roubles I had earned for extra work and rented a post-office box, and whenever I was sent in that vicinity on an errand I collected my mail. Usually there was none, and the sight of the blank empty box depressed me, no matter how brightly the sun was shining or what interesting sights I had seen.

My homesickness did not diminish as the months went by. On the contrary, it increased and I was afraid the others would notice it. The newspapers were peddled by Greeks, who for some reason seemed to have a monopoly on that occupation. I began reading them. In school and by listening to the well-bred customers in the shop I had learned to speak a passable Russian. My dialect no longer betrayed that I was from Volhynia. That made me feel more secure when I had to answer a question asked by a stranger or a police officer. The police stationed in the neighborhood of the brush factory knew that I had no matrika, but they were all tipped by Wikos, and were not particular about papers or such details. Their attitude removed one of my principal worries, but my anxiety about Sam increased each day, as if we had been inseparable all our lives.

My early contact with what might be termed the 'red-light district' was not one which inspired horror, disgust, or contempt. There was a beach perhaps a quarter of a

mile from the fish market, and occasionally, in summer, as a reward for good work or overtime, I was allowed to go in swimming. I had never been in salt water before, but at Kashoffka had learned to swim in the tricky eddies and currents of the river. One morning I went to the beach with another apprentice and not far away a group of what seemed to me the most beautiful of young women were splashing in the water. On the shore, to guard them and keep them together, sat a man and his wife whom I recognized as one of our customers. Wikos, for some reason, had never allowed me to deliver brushes to their house. Of course, the girls were naked. Only the élite troubled themselves about bathing suits. Some had very white skin and long black hair which hung to their waists, others were small and dark, like Oriental dolls. One I remember was a tall, strong Russian blonde, who amused herself by lifting two of her smaller comrades into the air. I was so fascinated watching the young women that I almost forgot to swim myself. I asked no questions until the girls had dried themselves, dressed, and gone home, always guarded carefully by the middle-aged couple who had sat on the beach.

'Who are they?' I asked. They were of such different types and their shouts betrayed so many different dialects that I knew they could not be of one family. I was equally sure that they were not aristocrats, not only because of their talk, but since they were not at all shy about showing themselves.

My companion, four or five years older than I, evaded my question and made me more curious than ever. I asked Wikos if I could not deliver the next order of brushes to the house in question and was answered by a resounding wallop on the cheek. I soon found out about

the girls' profession and often found reasons for crossing the forbidden district where they would wave at me through the windows or speak pleasantly from the doorways, dressed in gay colors and looking the more enticing because of their rather shabby surroundings. The segregated district was larger than the market, and quite as colorful. There one would see costumes from all the provinces of Russia and all the countries bordering upon it, hear snatches of Arabian or Armenian song, Caucasian melodies, tomtoms from Africa, guitars from Siberia, and sniff sandalwood incense from China. At night the windows would be shaded with tinted curtains, and the men, some dressed in faultless evening clothes, would enter the various doorways, which, as they were opened, often let escape the sound of dancing and laughter. Just as often there were shrieks and yells, for the proprietors treated their girls like slaves and for the slightest offense lashed them with blacksnake whips until their backs were bruised and bleeding. The police always took the part of the proprietors.

Saturday we did not work on account of the Jewish Sabbath. Wikos was strict in religious observances, but not so strict as the pious in Kashoffka. In Sebastopol there was less talk about devils and God's wrath. The proprietors attended the synagogues regularly but the workmen seldom troubled themselves about their spiritual welfare. Economic problems had diverted their attention. I had no convictions whatever. The fact that the Government was unjust impressed me little because I had supposed all governments were, that the function of Government had to do with compulsory service in the army, paying of high taxes, and the like. The arguments of the workers were well founded, but material splendor

attracted me more than political logic. I took advantage of our idle Saturdays to visit the museums and cathedrals and to mingle with the resplendent crowd on the Nachimoffsky Ulitza. Just to walk along the sidewalk or the pathway of a park with high officials and aristocrats gave me a thrill. In one of the museums I saw the boots of Peter the Great, the sword of Ivan the Terrible, the handkerchief of Great Catherine. I spent several days inspecting the Roman ruins in the outskirts of the city. In the underground school I was learning a little about history and the great conquests, and the sight of the old Roman amphitheater set my imagination to seething. Grandeur, past or present, elicited a whole-hearted response from me.

Twice each year the Tsar visited Sebastopol to pray in the great cathedral on the anniversary of the coronation of his grandfather. The city began to prepare itself weeks before the event was due to take place. Just to see the Tsar pass seemed to me the highest privilege. Every house in Kashoffka had a picture of the Tsar. I thought of him like a super man, God's agent, as we were taught. I worked overtime for a month on the strength of Wikos's promise that I could take a half day off when Tsar Nicholas arrived. Each evening as I worked, I was troubled by the fear that I might not see the Tsar, even if I were at liberty, for I had not grown an inch for two years and was so short that in a tightly packed crowd I could see nothing but the clothes of my immediate neighbors and a patch of sky overhead. The idea occurred to me of asking the retired admiral who had been so kind to me for a special pass, entitling me to a place where nothing could obstruct my view. I set out for the admiral's residence one evening and considered it a good omen that the two fierce dogs

still remembered me and did not raise a commotion when I appeared at the gate. I had written a careful letter to the admiral, stating my predicament and asking his aid. This I handed to the servant and said I would wait in the yard for an answer. I was always somewhat bewildered about the admiral, for he was a soft-spoken man, rather below the average in stature, and very fond of his daughter. All my life I had associated great stature, gruffness, and corpulence with prosperity and honor. I assumed that all important men were large, haughty, and had deep voices. For this reason I doubted secretly at times whether my old friend could really be the great hero he was said to be. I could not visualize him on the bridge of a battleship, half hidden with smoke clouds, surrounded by bursting shells, for I had seen him clipping flowers in his garden.

The admiral came to the door to speak to me and promised to secure a pass to the front ranks, near the Tsar's Landing. I was overcome with gratitude.

The Tsar's Landing was at the foot of Nachimoffsky Ulitza, on the edge of a huge paved circle in the center of which stood a statue of Nachimoff. At the head of the avenue, facing the sea, was the gorgeous cathedral in which the Tsar was to pray. The landing consisted of broad marble steps lined with Grecian columns, exquisitely proportioned and carved. The stairs led right down to the sea and disappeared into the water.

I can only try to describe the pomp and splendor of the day I spent in the shadow of Nachimoff's monument. At daybreak I was there, and to the astonishment of the sailors who were already drawn up in solid ranks around the circle and on both sides of the avenue, I produced a pass with seals and signatures that not the gruffest captain or

lieutenant could question. I stood alone in my place for hours before the crowd began to gather, but what greeted my eyes as the sun arose was enough to hold my interest for an indefinite time, The Nachimoffsky Ulitza and the buildings which bounded it had been transformed into a huge resplendent corridor which writhed with golden-yellow flags, on each of which was the black double eagle. Not a window or a cornice was without the national colors and the walls were festooned with bunting. The avenue, all the way from the landing to the cathedral, was carpeted with flowers and purple velvet. The harbor, on which the waters were hidden by battleships, cruisers, destroyers and magnificent yachts, fluttered with the blue and white naval flags and the Imperial ensign. Early in the morning sailors in dress uniforms, representing every branch of the service, poured into all the side streets which led to the avenue and blocked the way. Mounted Cossacks patrolled the wide avenues, riding in a continuous procession up one side of the avenue and down the other, each wiry little horse alert and perfectly trained. The horses of the Cossacks were taught, among other things, to disperse crowds, and when an order was given to clear an area a squadron would proceed with mechanical precision, moving exactly in line, trampling upon any one or any thing which chanced to be in the way.

Military and naval bands were massed beneath the trees of the park, the instruments brightly polished. Women wore their best and gaudiest dresses, all civilian men who owned frock coats had them on. In the midst of the elegant throng I stood in a patched blouse, my trousers held up by a rope, and it seemed that every officer in the Russian army made it his business to try to chase me away. I held my pass in my hand, all ready, and each

officer would look at it, let out an exclamation of surprise, hold it up to the light, then with a bewildered gesture give it back to me. This process, repeated so many times, amused the well-dressed men and women who also had reserved places, and one or two of them asked to see the mysterious paper which astonished all the military men. More than one of them knew the admiral and they joked among themselves about his having selected a shabby, red-headed boy to be the recipient of such high privileges. No matter how respectable a man might be, or how regal a woman, I kept hold of one corner of my pass when he or she looked at it.

Suddenly all the naval flags dipped at once. The effect was most extraordinary, for the harbor was a mass of flags which responded as if they were all controlled by a single hand. The guns of the battleships thundered out the Imperial salute. I was cold and trembling with excitement.

'That is the Imperial yacht,' some one said behind me, pointing to a slender white craft before which all the cruder vessels gave way. No sooner had the guns stopped booming than all the bandsmen, hundreds of them, lifted their instruments to the alert position. All morning there had been no music, for with the marvelous dramatic instinct of Russians, those in charge of the ceremony had reserved the first great crash of chords for the moment when the Tsar stepped from his launch to the foot of the landing. The launch crept away from the Imperial yacht and sped straight toward the marble steps, touching lightly the spot exactly between the Greek pillars. His Majesty stepped out and from all the brass and reed instruments massed along the avenue issued the first note of the national anthem. As spontaneously as the flags of the

fleet had dipped their first salute, the heads of the tens of thousands of people assembled around the landing and all the way to the cathedral were bared and the crowd began to sing:

'Great God, preserve the Tsar!'

The effect was as if the earth had burst and let out music in the place of fire and smoke, or as if all the glass in the world were dropped and smashed at once. The force of the sound swayed the flags, causing the black double eagles to writhe by the thousand. The leaves of the trees shuddered and shook. The Imperial party began mounting the stairs, and for miles in all directions sailors stood stiffly at salute. Following the Tsar were the Tsarina, their young son, and two daughters. I cannot say what the others in the crowd felt as they watched the royal family come up those steps, but on me the effect was appalling. I could not believe my eyes. For the Tsar of all the Russias, the man whose name carried terror and authority to every corner of the land, for whom streets were carpeted with velvet and tens of thousands of his subjects prayed and sang, was a timid, undersized little man, even smaller than the admiral. His face was careworn, almost haggard. His step and bearing were nervous, apprehensive. I could not suppress a feeling of pity for him, a desire to cry. The Tsarina was more impressive. I remember that her profile was quite delicate and she walked like a queen. The daughters, too, were lively girls, with luxurious braids of hair and modest manners. But the Tsarevitch, for whom all Kashoffka had given thanks to God on the day of his birth, was frail and sickly in appearance. I could not conceive of him as a future monarch. I thought to myself that I could lick him with one hand.

Behind the royal family marched the members of the Tsar's military staff, such tall and robust men that they made their sovereign seem the more diminutive, high officers of the army and the navy, foreign dignitaries and guests of honor and a few civil officials in frock coats and carrying tall silk hats in their hands. The Tsar's carriage, bearing the Imperial emblem on each side of the coach, and drawn by horses caparisoned in draperies of the national colors, waited at the head of the landing stairs and the Tsar and his family entered it. The procession proceeded over the velvet carpet and flowers to the cathedral door, where the audience contained nothing less than generals, duchesses, or millionaires. The voices of the choir carried all the way to where I was standing and the chimes added their sonorous tones to the rhythmic waves of sound.

And so, when I think of the late Tsar Nicholas, it is not as a tyrant and an oppressor, the man who forbade the Jews of Moscow to join in his coronation ceremonies, whose ministers encouraged massacres and pardoned those who carried them out, who wore the badge of the terrible Black Hundred and shot down his peaceful subjects who had marched in a body to his palace to demand his protection. I think of him as a small, fearful man with a neatly trimmed beard and soft brown eyes, mounting perpetually a flight of broad marble stairs, weary and apprehensive, dismayed even by the riotous colors and sounds which rose to greet him, a victim of power and splendor rather than a man who wielded one and enjoyed the other as his divine right. Thus personal contacts, even of the most casual and ephemeral sort, outweigh long shelves of history books and accumulations of indirect information. The Romanov dynasty, whatever

were its faults, put on a show I can never forget and to which I had a reserved place in the front rank of spectators.

Several weeks after the Tsar's visit I witnessed another demonstration of a very different character, but one which moved me nearly as much. Graf Tolstoy came to Sebastopol, and this time, although there was no carpet spread upon the street nor special marble landing-place, the space around Nachimoff's statue and the avenue were crowded with people who cheered the great writer and followed him to his hotel. This time all my socialistic comrades were as enthusiastic as I was, for Tolstoy, I was told, championed the cause of the poor and oppressed, disdained the pomp and glitter so dear to his peers, and defied even the Government. Not even the Tsar dared order his arrest.

I saw a tall, dignified man stride down the gangplank unattended, his magnificent head held proudly, his long arms swinging at his side. He bowed graciously as the crowd burst into cheers. The soldiers and sailors were in evidence, massed here and there at strategic points, but he paid little attention to them and the officers were surly and indignant. Graf Tolstoy passed quite near to me and I saw his deep-set, piercing eyes and the thoughtful, almost tortured expression of his face. He walked bareheaded beneath the trees which lined the avenue, at times forgetful of the throngs of admirers at his heels. I had never read a word he had written and only knew by hearsay what he stood for, but instinctively I realized his greatness and since have learned how amply justified my feelings were. The sight of him and the tales of his achievements as a writer and defender of the oppressed stirred my desire for schooling and caused me to pay stricter at-

tention each Sunday in our hidden schoolroom. All my life I had heard of the Hebrew prophets, and Tolstoy seemed to me like one of them, a man of old in a modern setting, thundering defiance at those who abused their power and enslaved their fellow men.

Our school did not remain undisturbed much longer. One Sunday afternoon, in the midst of talk by a young and ardent student from a college near by, we heard a crash at the door, the hinges gave way, and a squad of police, whips and swords in their hands, broke in. We were lined up roughly and marched in single file to the sidewalk where wagons were waiting to take us to the jail. We must have afforded an odd spectacle. There were working-men and women in their everyday clothes, a few rich students from the universities, several old men just learning to spell, and a number of boys of whom I was the youngest. The women were eager, impetuous creatures, nearly all of them in rags and with unkempt hair, for they emphasized the fact that they had more important functions than to beautify themselves. After the revolution they would have time to dress well. In a large room on the ground floor of the prison we were herded together, then one by one were singled out by the police and pushed toward a flight of stone steps leading to the cellar. We could hear no sound from below and no one returned from there. My turn came early, for I was so much smaller than the others that I think the officials believed I could be made to tell what I knew with the least trouble. The cell downstairs was almost dark, with damp stone walls and floor. One small window let in a little light, and near it were hanging on the wall several whips with metal thongs in the leather. Now it was an agreement between all of the revolutionists that if we were

caught we were simply to say that we knew nothing, no matter what was done to us. I made the mistake of expressing my lack of knowledge too soon, for while my blouse was being torn off and my back stripped to the waist, before a single question had been asked, I shouted:

'I know nothing!'

A certain type of suspect was known to the police by that name. They were called 'the know-nothings.'

In response to my unsolicited remark, one of the gendarmes brought down the cat-tails upon my back. I was aware of a hot stinging sensation, a fluid pain which enveloped my whole body and rose and fell in intensity like the waves. Suddenly he stopped lashing me, and I was asked whether I knew any revolutionists.

'I know nothing,' I said, and the lashing started again. I was made giddy by the smell of my own blood and sank to the floor. An officer jerked me to my feet. I was questioned, then lashed, questioned, lashed, faint, revived by a bucket of cold water, held up, lashed, fell again. I was nearly unconscious for the second or third time when I heard an indignant voice upon the stairway.

'Aren't you ashamed of yourselves, beating a boy like that?' I saw him wink.

My torturers stopped and stepped back in fright, for the chief of police, to whom I had delivered brushes, stood over me. He recognized my red hair.

'Come with me,' he said, and helped me dress. His carriage was outside and I was astonished to see that we were driving to his residence. Once there, he procured some clean clothes for me, had me bathed by a servant, and took me to the garden, where his daughter was playing. All the rest of that day and the next, he kept me there, giving me candy, sending me to sleep upon the soft-

est bed I had ever crept into. All the toys and balloons and pets of the house were at my disposal, and whenever he saw me the chief would repeat: 'The idea! Mistreating a child! You don't know any revolutionists, I'll bet! You never saw one!'

His kindness puzzled me, and I was worried because neither Wikos nor any of my comrades knew where I was. On Tuesday morning, he sent me back to the brush factory with a new rouble in my pocket, still weak from the loss of blood and bewildered by the splendor of the chief's residence. Whether it was all a trap, for the police had been making frantic efforts to hunt down those who were opposed to the Government, or whether the old man had an actual touch of remorse on account of a little son he had lost, I never knew. I was too much occupied during the ensuing fortnight to think about it, for Wikos came home one evening pale and shaking. On a sidetrack near the railroad station, he had seen a carload of the long-haired Russian workmen, armed, and under the escort of troops. Forces were gathering for a pogrom. As Wikos was warning us, two of his employees were turning the crank which let down the iron shutters in front of the shop. The shutters creaked with a frightful noise and similar sounds could be heard up and down the street and all through the section where the Jewish shopkeepers had goods exposed in their windows. A high fence with spikes on the top bordered out the factory yard, on the side toward the sea. The back gate was bolted and reënforced with lumber which littered the yard. That entrance and the door of the shop were the only two through which we might be attacked.

Whether the pogrom had any official connection with the series of raids the police had just conducted, I cannot

say. It is certain that the officials knew of it in advance, and facilitated the movements of the workmen who were planning to loot and massacre the Jews. Two years later the head of the Russian secret police openly charged the Jews as a whole with revolutionary activities and organized pogroms, adding a patriotic appeal to the religious prejudice which formerly had motivated the attacks. The Jewish shopowners and business men were far from being revolutionists. But many of the workmen in the larger cities were allied with the underground movement, on economic rather than racial grounds.

I could only dimly surmise what was coming, for my only glimpse of a pogrom had been in Odessa, as I have related. That night I scarcely slept at all and when I did doze off I woke up in a sweat from a nightmare in which blood-stained butchers and disheveled Russians with unkempt black hair played a part. Faint sounds of hammering were audible, long before dawn. The shopkeepers who had no metal shutters were boarding up the front of their stores. Wikos had less to fear than most of the small business men, for brushes are not attractive to mobs. My comrades were afraid the rioters would rush the back gate, and early in the morning, when the streets were still quiet and the harbor craft were swaying drowsily, some with lanterns still burning fore and aft, one of our men secured a half-dozen force pumps as large as one man could handle. Another rolled in a drum of benzine. I did not understand the use of the pumps and the benzine, but not many days passed before I learned what they were for.

No disorders occurred the following day, but the whole city was in a state of ominous expectancy. Committees of rich Jews waited long hours in the corridors of all the offices where high officials sat, offering money, anything

at all to avert the disaster. Formal appeals for protection were made to the police, the commander of the military garrison, the naval officers. Some wealthy Jews fled the city, taking their families and their small valuables with them. Thieves, who knew what was going on, lurked on the roads leading from the city and waylaid many who were trying to escape. Watchmen were hired for exorbitant prices and paced up and down, armed with clubs and guns.

I had less fear on the streets than I had when cooped up in the factory. In the quarters where no Jews lived, the usual sights were to be seen. Everything went along as before. I saw pretty nursemaids in the park, watching their charges play, army officers rode smartly on the bridle paths, processions gleaming with embroidered robes and bright-colored vestments went slowly in and out of the cathedrals. I believed Wikos's warning had been a false alarm at times, then unmistakable signs of strife would come to my notice. The young butchers were ready to rush to the rescue, wherever the first attack took place. Other bands of defense were enlarged and arms were distributed. It was very difficult for the Jews to get weapons, however, since they were forbidden to carry them or to keep them in their houses. Once, in turning a corner, I saw a band of 'Goulyanis' approaching and made a quick about-face and disappeared. We called the unskilled Russian laborers 'Goulyanis.'

Just after dawn on the third day we heard a shot, then the sound of boards breaking and men and women screaming. A small band of rioters had broken into a Jewish shop a block away and were helping themselves to the goods there. That was the way the pogrom began. All through the Jewish quarter, isolated attacks were

made about the same time and thereafter the Goulyanis wore new shirts and belts and blouses. The police were on the streets as usual, but made no move to interfere. At the barracks, the guard was changed at the usual hour, the bugles blew, the troops ate their breakfast and drilled as if there were no trouble in all the world. The gay and casual way in which the city's activities proceeded, contrasted with the gloom and apprehension in the tightly boarded Jewish houses, was grotesque and baffling. On the evening of the third day, a large band of rioters was met by the Jewish butchers and a fight ensued in which several men on both sides were killed. That was like a signal for a general massacre. Small mobs grew up everywhere, consolidated, separated again. Store fronts were smashed, women dragged into the streets by their hair, young girls chased from room to room and violated. Old men had their beards cut off, roughly, with knives. Women seventy and eighty years of age were clubbed and stabbed. The bands of defense rushed here and there, massing in alleyways, carrying goods from burning stores.

I was in the darkened shop with Wikos. He was afraid not only for his life but for his business. It was just about the time bills of exchange, notes, and other commercial paper were coming into use in Russia and the failure to fulfill a written obligation at the hour specified was most damaging to one's credit. So much of the business transacted by Jews had to be done by legal subterfuges and they got the worst of things in court so often that the Jewish business men were particularly scrupulous in their dealings with Gentile bankers or merchants, anxious to leave no loophole through which they might be cheated on some technicality. Wikos was worried because the next morning he was due at one of the large banks to pay

a promissory note. In case he did not, his creditor might have him arrested or seize his store. If he appeared on the streets, the chances were ten to one he would be slaughtered, for Wikos's profile was not such as to enable him to pass in a crowd as a Swede or an Englishman. He wrung his hands, moaned, and paced the floor, while from outside came faint sounds of breaking glass and crazed human voices.

I knew the city so well by that time that I thought I could get to the bank safely, by hiding from doorway to doorway in case the Goulyanis appeared, so I volunteered to act as messenger, and the next morning, just before banking hours, I set out, my blouse stuffed with coins. I had no trouble on the way to the bank, although I had to hide several times, but once out of the Jewish quarter I looked like any other boy. The guardian at the bank door, dressed more resplendently than my friend the admiral on a gala day, was doubtful about letting me in, but I insisted upon seeing the manager and would talk to no one else. It was some time, and after several rebuffs, before I got into the room where the bank officials sat. I counted the coins and the bills on the table, and demanded the countersigned note. The bankers were surprised and, for the moment, amused, although I think they had counted upon getting the best of Wikos because of the riots and disturbances which for several days had kept all Jews locked tightly in their houses. My success emboldened me to go to the post-office as well.

On my way back, as soon as I entered the Jewish quarter I saw that the Goulyanis were everywhere. By hiding behind trees and wedging myself into strange entryways, I arrived at the door of our shop. I figured that the front door, on the broad avenue, would be safer

than the back entrance which was heavily barricaded and opened into an area which was frequented by hooligans at all times and especially when trouble was going on. Just as I was about to give the signal agreed upon for admission, a gang of rioters came around a near-by corner, saw me, and started to run in my direction. There was no hope of running away from them, so I stood where I was, paralyzed with fear. Their leader caught me by the arm.

'What are you doing?' he asked.

The others crowded around. There were about a dozen men, all of the most brutal type.

'I wanted to see if a Zhyd lived here,' I said, in Russian slang. Then I added, 'He's moved away.'

That remark is another of the shameful things I am impelled at last to confess. In all the years since it passed my lips I have never repeated it before. The word 'Zhyd' is the most contemptuous Russian word to designate a Jew. Faced by that gang of murderers, after days of suspense and an adventurous morning, I denied my race and scoffed at my people to save my own head. Doubtless I should have died. I can never be sure about it. Thousands of times I have reasoned the whole thing out and always logic justifies my action. Just as inevitably my cheeks flush with shame, not because of the conditions which made such a subterfuge necessary, but on account of a gnawing, insistent feeling that I was tried and found wanting. Thousands, even tens of thousands of Jews went to their death for reasons of less consequence.

The Goulyanis went away, to continue their work, and I set out in the other direction and wandered around the safer districts of the city for hours before I tried again to get into the shop. I found Wikos in a state of collapse, for they had all given up hope of seeing me again and he felt

that he had murdered me for the sake of his credit. If there is such a thing as joy in the midst of massacre, they seemed to experience it for a short time. The table was set and we all ate our fill and drank sweet wine.

At dusk the disorders in the area between the factory and the market increased. Cries and shouts went up continually. Cowering behind our fence we heard groans and thuds and all the gruesome noises which attend the struggle of desperate men and frightened women. The Goulyanis were scouring the neighborhood for Jews in hiding, and our high fence excited their curiosity. Just at dark, Soifer's son and I were standing in the courtyard, talking in a whisper, when we saw a torn and dirty cap appear over the top of the fence, then a terrible face, around which the unkempt hair betrayed unmistakably one of our enemies. I ran to the door to give the alarm and three of the factory hands came rushing out with pumps in their hands. The head ducked down behind the fence, but in a moment there was a crash at the gate and three men tried to climb the barrier. It was then I learned the use of the pumps and the benzine. The attackers were met by a spray which blinded and choked them, and fell back, cursing.

'Get some matches,' my chum said, and we picked handfuls of them.

I do not know how many men were outside, but the crashes against the gate increased in violence and the cry went up outside: 'Here are the Zhyds! Let's get them!'

By the sound of voices outside, it seemed to me as if there were a hundred men. One by one they tried to scale the fence. Our comrades worked the pumps, and I followed the other boy's example by standing near our men with lighted torches. At my left I saw a man get his

leg over the fence and raise his body to a position where he was about to jump into the yard. A spray of benzine struck him and saturated his clothes and this time Soifer's son, white with terror, tossed a taper toward the attacker. There was a sudden flare, the odor of burnt flesh and rags, and the Goulyani fell burning from the fence, landing outside. Howls of rage went up, four or five men were lifted to the fence at the same time, one in front of me. Somehow, although I was acting exactly as if I were in a horrible dream, with my limbs leaden and my mind groping at the same time for the relief of awakening, I lighted the match in my hand and tossed it into the benzine spray. The whole neighborhood was illumined for an instant by the flash which followed and the concussion swept me backward a step or two. Three of the attackers fell outside the fence and two inside. Our champion brush-maker, who sat so quietly all day at his work and sang to himself, clubbed them to death with a two-by-four. There they lay.

I do not know what diverted the attack, for surely there were dozens of men in the mob which stormed our gate. But all at once the noises diminished a little, then subsided. We heard the rioters farther up the street, and the shrieks of those who were less fortunate than we were in their defense. After a while the neighborhood was more quiet than it had been since the pogrom started. I suddenly believed the worst was over, that things were drifting back to their usual state. I proved to be right. On the following day there were only a few desultory clashes. On the next day but one it was reported that a box-car load of Goulyanis had been seen in the railroad yard, about to depart. For several days after the pogrom was over, none of us dared go out of doors but somehow we got back into

the old routine and those frightful days slid back into that section of our memory reserved for sights and scenes not fit to review, but which are called up by treacherous mental associations infrequently, as if the wind had blown the sheet from the face of a mutilated corpse.

The bodies of the two dead men were lugged from our yard by a Turk whom Wikos paid thirty kopeks.

The Sebastopol seasons never included the great white sweep of winter of Kashoffka. There was a rainy spell in February and March and although the poor were spared intense suffering from the cold, illness was always prevalent at that time of year. I caught a cold which developed into something worse, probably a disease resembling influenza, and after lying on the floor resting on the straw for several days I was taken to the public hospital where I lay in a tremendous ward on one of the many cots which were ranged in rows from wall to wall with a narrow center aisle through which doctors, internes, and nurses passed. I was quite sick for a few days, but did not suffer much and during my period of convalescence I sat up, shouted back and forth to other patients with whom I quickly got acquainted, listened eagerly to the strange words dropped by the doctors, watched the handsome nurses flirt with the internes, and thought about many things. I was sorry when they told me I must go, for I had worked hard many months and had passed through harrowing experiences. While I was in the hospital Wikos's wife came to see me once or twice, bringing me food and wine and telling me what was taking place in the shop.

One day a young student, a Socialist who had taught classes of older men in our disbanded school, called on me, for he had heard I was sick, and, having nothing to

give me as a present, took off his leather belt which had upon the buckle the insignia of his university. This he offered with touching grace, and I accepted it joyfully and, remembering the fate of my other belt, resolved to take better care of this one. My shabbiness had been a source of continuous embarrassment to me. Wherever I went I felt that I was handicapped by my clothes. Bankers and military officers looked askance at the bills of exchange or the passes I handed them. Women walked past me as if I did not exist. For a while after I was discharged from the hospital I did not have to work very hard and spent much time on the streets. My university belt stirred my longing for a better wardrobe. At the close of my first year Wikos had offered me the ten roubles due for clothing, but I had been reluctant to spend them and had asked him to keep them for me. So I had credit to the extent of ten roubles and had earned several more doing odd jobs.

On the avenue named for the great Nachimoff was a shoemaker's shop over the door of which I saw the Imperial double eagles and was told that the man inside was bootmaker to His Majesty the Tsar, by special appointment. Through the window I could see the certificate of his appointment, framed and proudly displayed with ribbons and seals on the wall. All my desires seemed to crystallize into one overwhelming urge to have a pair of boots made by the Tsar's own bootmaker. I walked back and forth in front of the shop, wondering how much such a pair of boots would cost, but for several days could not get up courage to inquire. The thought of such a purchase brought back vividly all the glory of the Tsar's visit, and I asked myself what my neighbors in Kashoffka would think if they knew I was walking the streets of

Sebastopol in polished boots made by the first bootmaker in the land.

One evening, when there were no other customers, I opened the door of the shop, timidly, and wedged myself in. The interior was nothing like the dingy doorway in which the shoemakers of Kashoffka toiled, praying as they sewed. The royal bootmaker was a tall, proud old man with well-combed white mustaches and an embroidered blouse. He had pictures of the royal family on the walls, pictures in which the feet were visible. I was sure he had made some of the boots which great artists had portrayed.

The Tsar's bootmaker smiled when he saw me, supposing I had been sent there by some aristocrat for whom he was making a pair of boots. When he learned that I was thinking of purchasing a pair for myself, his mustaches flapped up and down with surprise and he burst into laughter which could be heard across the street. I blushed to the roots of my hair and was ready to run from the place, but he detained me kindly and made me repeat my question. I asked him again what was his rock-bottom price for making a pair of boots my size. He deliberated a long while, no doubt computing what the materials would cost him, for he could only work with the finest leather. Finally he said:

'Eighteen roubles.'

I was bitterly disappointed for I had only twelve roubles. Still I could not give up my project and suddenly it occured to me that I might be able to afford a pair of soft boots reaching only to my ankles, with elastic in the tops — 'komashen,' we called them.

'How much are komashen?' I asked and could not conceal the disappointment in my voice. The old man deliberated again, a much longer time, and said: 'How much do you want to spend?'

I told him all I had was twelve roubles.

'All right,' he said, and seemed astonished, but once we were embarked on the deal, he took it very gravely. He made an appointment with me for the third ensuing evening, at quarter past eight.

'Promptly,' he said, knitting his shaggy eyebrows.

He need not have said it, for I was waiting behind a tree on the other side of the avenue for an hour before the specified time. The shop was not devoid of customers, however. Several important-looking men, doing their best to control their smiles, were ranged along the wall and offered advice as I was being measured. (I think the bootmaker had told them about me and had invited them to be on hand.) Of course, I had my feet washed and one of the working men let me take a pair of socks without holes.

Now the Tsar's bootmaker, before he took a single measurement, asked me a number of questions. Where was I born? What did I do for a living? Had I really seen His Majesty? Had His Majesty seen me? This last question I answered in the affirmative, and the spectators could not restrain their laughter any longer. I was somewhat nettled, and insisted that the Admiral of the Black Sea fleet had given me a pass and that I had stood in the front rank when the Tsar passed by and that he had bowed in my direction when I had shouted 'Long live the Tsar!'

The taking of measurements was not completed the first evening, although it took an hour. Two evenings later I returned, and this time the shop was crowded. The same men who had witnessed the beginning of the

operation were in evidence, as well as many of their acquaintances and one or two well-dressed women. There were more questions. I was forced to tell nearly the whole story of my life. After that, several fittings were necessary and with each one the crowd of witnesses grew. Several of them no longer seemed like strangers, so I was induced to sing a song for them and I was very careful to choose one of the Kashoffka selections, for I was sure none of my new friends had revolutionary tendencies. At last the komashen were ready, and I paid my twelve roubles. I wore them on Sundays and holidays, and I am sure that whatever woes the Romanovs had, they never suffered from sore feet. The shoes fitted like gloves and wore like iron.

I must interrupt the thread of my story here to tell about the fate of my komashen, fashioned by the hands of the bootmaker by special appointment to the Tsar of all the Russias. When I arrived in Boston and started earning my living selling papers, my landlady, a good-hearted soul, tried to impress upon me that my clothes were unsuitable for America, that they betrayed me everywhere as a 'greenhorn.' The way in which other boys threw stones and snowballs at me for no reason I could fathom seemed to bear out what she said, so I sacrificed the fur coat, which though crude was warm, and bought a cheap green sweater through which the cold winds blew in and out as easily as the swallows entered the Kashoffka barns. My fur cap went the same route, and there were fewer stones flung my way. But I would not throw away my komashen, which no matter how long I tramped the streets, remained soft and in every way admirable. When they began to show signs of wear I bought a pair of second-hand shoes to save the

komashen for better days. My landlady, believing she was doing me a favor in thwarting my stubborn will and hastening my Americanization, one day when I was away, sold my komashen to a junk man, and only when she thought I was on the point of throwing myself into the river on account of their loss told me what she had done. I rushed from the house and spent all my spare time for a month entering strange junk shops and second-hand shops, inquiring for my komashen and offering to buy them back at any price. I never recovered them, and some unsuspecting person no doubt repurchased them and unwittingly became the owner of a pair of shoes made by the most skillful hand in Russia. I have lost many articles which cost more than twelve roubles, but none which struck so deeply into my heart as those komashen.

Our underground school was never reorganized, at least not while I was in Sebastopol, but I attended several secret meetings and was often used as messenger to inform the workers in other factories where meetings were to take place. The revolutionists' strongest hope was to implicate Russia in a war, and I believe about that time the representative of a foreign government at Saint Petersburg was bombed by anarchists with the purpose of causing resentment in his country. I saw several foreign diplomats in Sebastopol, one of the first being as black as a silk hat and nearly seven feet tall. He rode down the avenue in a carriage, accompanied by black aides, and I assumed he must hold some high position on the continent inhabited by Negroes.

I have seldom seen such earnest young people as those who addressed us at the underground meetings. Education of the masses, the awakening of class consciousness, and the necessity for war were the three themes on which

they elaborated. Sometimes they would report what progress was being made along educational lines. Naturally the greatest obstacle to revolution was the military force. The naval recruits were selected because of their physique and their capacity for obedience, two qualities which did not tend to render them amenable to education. Little or no progress was made by the revolutionists in the fleet. The Cossacks were even more loyal than the sailors. Theirs was a tradition of long standing; vacancies in the ranks were filled by the sons of former Cossacks. At one period, when a Cossack registered the birth of a son, the Government gave a colt to the infant, so that horse and man might grow up together. I have already described the efficiency and relentlessness with which the Cossacks dispersed crowds. Their weapons on those occasions were whips which they wielded with mechanical precision and impersonality.

Already in 1901, however, considerable inroads had been made in the army and an effort was being made to break the morale of the troops so that in case of a clash the soldiers would side with the workers. The Socialists worked day and night among the young men who were about to be called for military service, cautiously and with infinite patience. Of course, the recruits from the isolated country districts could not be reached, but the converts in the ranks were instructed to spread the idea of a state in which those classes then oppressed and kept in darkness should be given fair opportunities. No threats or discouragements could dissuade the young advocates of a new social order from preaching their doctrine. Many of them were of rich families and aristocratic training and had come in contact with the Marxian ideas in the universities, which were hotbeds of revolution. Gradually the Socialistic ranks were being filled with officers of the army and some priests.

I heard so much talk about an uprising and an overthrow of the Tsar's government that it seemed to me daily that it must occur. Revolution was in the air. The officials were aware of it. The more sensitive of them smelled it. But how hard it was to find tangible evidence or to find a defense against ideas which seemed to float through the air like seeds on an autumn breeze, to spring up in the most unexpected places in other seasons. It is true that suspects were executed or sent to Siberia on the flimsiest pretexts, but this afforded the police or the ministers little satisfaction, for without evidence they could never be sure they had punished the right man. If the suspect were a Jew, his guilt mattered little. Every one in power assumed he was guilty of something.

That others, and especially Americans, were not as well aware of the prevailing political currents as I was came home to me vividly in 1903 when the Russo-Japanese War broke out. I was then in Boston and I remembered well that when I called at the usual place for my supply of papers I saw spread over the entire front page of a Hearst newspaper the black double eagle of Russia. I cannot tell how excited I was, for to me war meant revolution, the chance my old companions and teachers had been praying and working for, a reward at last for their sacrifices. I bought a double supply of papers, expecting that such news would cause every man on the street to grab for one. To my amazement, no one seemed interested. My customers would glance casually at the front page, murmur 'Humph! Another war!' then turn to the sports or the financial page. I found myself with a sheaf of papers I could not sell on my hand and a loss to show for my day's labor.

The leaders of the revolution made a tactical error at the time of the Japanese war. Instead of striking while the soldiers were away at the front and the city garrisons scanty, they waited until the troops returned, believing that they would be so discouraged at their defeat and the treatment they had received at the hands of the officers that they would turn against the Government. They were wrong, poor souls. The time had not yet come. My fellow apprentices, the workmen, and the women who had no time to tie ribbons in their hair, my old teachers, the champion brushmaker from Odessa and the young student who gave me my belt, together with hundreds of their comrades from shop and university gathered in the shadow of the statue of Nachimoff on the appointed day in 1905, were surrounded by Cossacks who rode in from side streets with their accustomed precision, and one by one, or in groups, some suddenly, some with protracted agonies, gave up their lives. There, but for my natural restlessness, the guidance of my mother's spirit, my luck or whatever you please, might I have ended my earthly observations. Far away, I felt the weight of sadness and discouragement the collapse of that attempt entailed. I wept, as I peddled the news, for the brother of Itze, with whom I used to climb trees in Kashoffka, for Soifer's amiable son, for all those who wanted vital things too soon. The sorrow, so far as I could see, was all mine. The men on the streets I was then treading hardly gave the item a glance. Even in 1917, nearly two decades after I had felt the preparatory rumblings of the earthquake which was so sure to follow, great surprise greeted the overthrow of the Tsar and his Government in this country.

While I am enumerating so many of my friends who

died, I must not forget the admiral, although he died in bed and not for any social or political cause. I read of his death one morning soon after I was released from the hospital and his funeral was a spectacle which almost equaled the reception of the Tsar. I was in no doubt after that procession that he was, indeed, a great hero. The front of the cathedral was draped in black, and in the gloom of the interior huge black tapers burned slowly. The carriages in which rode the members of his family, the civil and military officials, the foreign dignitaries, and the millionaires, were black, drawn by black horses blanketed in black. The eyes of the horses had been treated with some chemical preparation which caused tears to fall continually as they stepped solemnly along. The body of my old friend, in a black ebony casket, was borne upon an artillery caisson and wrapped in the flag with the double eagle. Massed military bands with muffled drums played dirges. Carriage after carriage passed by, and at the end of the long file of distinguished mourners walked throngs of bareheaded men and women, nearly the entire population of Sebastopol. Along toward the end I myself marched along, my red head bowed, my cap held over my heart, as were the tall hats of the dignitaries, and as I followed my benefactor to the grave, I repeated Hebrew prayers appropriate to the occasion. He would not have minded.

All the time, like the tide rising slowly beneath the many-colored vessels in the harbor, the feeling of homesickness and anxiety about Sam was growing, in spite of the succession of brilliant and intriguing events which passed before my eyes and the flattering attempts both Wikos and his wife made to make my position with them comfortable. I believe that my restlessness, the feeling

that I must go away, made me extra sensitive to the impressions I was receiving. Just before my second year of apprenticeship came to a close, Wikos made the proposition that I remain in Sebastopol and become his son by legal adoption. The moment he uttered the words, the long series of his actions became clear to me. The chance he offered me was, indeed, attractive in many ways. I had grown fond of Sebastopol. On any street I was likely to meet some one I knew. Business, on a larger scale than was possible in Kashoffka, intrigued me and stimulated my best efforts. But I could not forget Sam. Unable to get in touch with my brother, I thought only of reaching the village again and discussing the situation with Bessie. I had no desire whatever to see my father.

It was the memory of the third-class compartment, the slap I received for a slip of the boot brush, and such trifles which helped me make up my mind. The decision was instinctive rather than logical, but something compelled me to return home. My refusal to become a member of the Wikos family resulted badly for several other people, for just before I left, Wikos brought one of his nieces, a very pretty young girl, into the house with the idea of adopting her. The niece was a lively girl, amazingly attractive to young men who began lurking around the neighborhood. Whenever the girl would slip out, in the evening, to go walking with one of her many beaux, Wikos would discover her absence and beat her when she returned. In this way he began to desire her so much that he could not control himself. He became violently jealous not only of the suitors but of all the boys in the shop, any male creature who even looked at her. Wikos's wife noticed what had happened and her wails resounded throughout the whole neighborhood, day and night. To those of Madame Wikos were added the shrieks of the niece when she crept into the house and was stripped and lashed by Wikos, in a tightly locked room against the door of which the half-crazed wife kept thumping her body. It all ended by Wikos's overpowering and violating the girl and then divorcing his wife on the grounds of barrenness. The wife was packed off to her folks and the niece became mistress of the establishment.

I arranged to be released from the last two years of apprenticeship by offering to waive the twenty roubles due me for clothing. Wikos reluctantly consented to let me go, but without the twenty roubles I had barely enough money to get to Kashoffka on a half-rate ticket. The days dragged, toward the end of my term in the brush factory, but finally I put in my last hour, packed my belongings into a small bundle, dressed myself as well as I could, with a thought for the effect my costume would have in the village, cleaned my pillow, and set out.

On the boat to Odessa, where I was known to the officers and sailors, for I had made many voyages back and forth with them, I got a ticket for half fare. They knew I was more than nine years of age, but were not insistent upon getting the full rate from me. At the railroad station in Odessa, however, where I tried to buy a ticket to Golob, the man looked me over and refused to sell me a child's ticket, asking for my matrika to prove how old I was. I was again frightened because of the lack of a matrika and dismayed to find myself without sufficient funds. I went to one of the merchants with whom I had transacted business for Wikos and asked him to lend me money, but he thought I was running away from my employer and refused to aid me. Other merchants reasoned likewise, one or two of them suggesting that they ought to turn

me over to the police. I had nothing of value except my eiderdown pillow. It is unnecessary to say again what it meant to me, but I was forced to pawn it and was beaten down to two roubles. I decided to buy a ticket to a nearer station with what money I had and to hide myself or beg the conductor to take me to my real destination.

On that journey I passed in reverse order the stations and verdant countrysides which had so astonished me as I was fleeing Kashoffka two years before, but I had little chance to look out of the windows. I found a third-class compartment which was crowded with peasants who seemed good-natured and amiable, and after I had passed the station to which I was entitled to ride, hid beneath the broad skirts of the women or among the odd articles of baggage which were piled around the seats. The moment the conductor would appear, I would duck. When it was safe to show myself, I would tell stories and sing songs for the benefit of the passengers who were helping me get by.

In selecting men or women to aid me, I always chose those who were fat and well-fed, buxom, matronly women or self-satisfied men. The conductor, unfortunately, was lean. I am sure he suffered from dyspepsia. So I hoped for no favors from him. He found me at last and put me off, but I learned that the conductors were changed at that station, so after being put off I climbed aboard another car and worked my way slowly back to my old compartment. The passengers were delighted and gave me food and vodka.

The second conductor was rotund and jolly. When he saw my foot protruding from a heap of bundles my companions had thrown over me, he hauled me out, but my own entreaties, reënforced by my fellow travelers who

swore they had seen my ticket when we pulled out of Odessa and that I had really lost it, persuaded him to let me ride. As we approached Golob and the landscape took on the familiar tone which had been obscured in my mind by the kaleidoscopic beauties of Odessa and Sebastopol, I could not sit still. I had told my story a hundred times to the men and women on the train, the visit of the Tsar, Graf Tolstoy, the admiral's funeral, the history of my komashen, which excited their admiration. To how many of those strangers I am indebted for food, protection, and sympathy I cannot say. It seemed toward the end as if I owned the train, and when I got off, hands waved at me the whole length of the Golob station and God was asked in numerous tongues and dialects to bless me and protect me from the Devil. I had nearly forgotten about the Devil, in my two years of city life.

I had also forgotten, in the midst of so much kindness, that I had only a little change in my pocket. I stood for a while, intoxicated with renewed impressions of the spacious landscape which was native to me, the familiar quality of light, the foliage of trees I recognized. I was getting back to my own land, to the harmony and drowsy beauty in which I had been reared. At that moment I had no regrets for Odessa and Sebastopol, no longings for America, surely. But the city of Golob, so dirty and dismal, where the streets were deep in filth and mud, the houses shabby, the corners and squares unlighted, depressed me. I wanted to get out of it, and into the country, as soon as possible. What could such miserable cities mean to me, after the City of God and the first port of the land? Boys stared at me, but not because I was from the country. The clothes I had worn from Sebastopol aroused their respect rather than contempt. They were the yokels, in my estimation, this time.

Together with the other passengers who descended from the train in Golob, I was surrounded by a pack of cab drivers who hoped to get a fare who was going as far as Melnitza. Each driver yelled in our ears, extolling his horses and his wagon, swearing there were no lice in his straw, that he would protect his clients against robbers, even by laying down his life. One of the cab drivers recognized my face and asked: 'Whose son are you?'

'Oh, you are the son of Hannah the Saint,' he exclaimed. 'Get right in.'

I expected, after such a warm reception, to get a better price from him. He did not even ask me how much money I had. There were other passengers bound for Melnitza, among them two or three young women who wore wigs, dropped their eyes, and acted with extreme piety. We rattled over the paved road and the muddy stretches which followed. Darkness fell and the moon rose. Nearly all of my fellow travelers went to sleep, but I had noticed that one big strapping man had been unable to keep his eyes from one of the pious young women and had maneuvered himself into a place beside her. I pretended to sleep, and what I saw take place, while it did not surprise me, was entertaining enough to keep me awake. As we approached Melnitza, the young woman resumed her modest air, but was noticeably paler and more exhausted by the journey than her two companions who had slept like angels.

At Melnitza, the driver demanded a rouble of me. I had thought the rate would be only forty kopeks. He was angry, forgetting all about my parentage for the moment, and took all the money I had. I was sure that in Melnitza I should find some one from Kashoffka who would give me a place on his wagon, but I wandered

around for several hours and luck was against me. None of my former neighbors appeared. I reflected that it might be a week or ten days before I got the necessary lift. Finally I remembered that a Kashoffka girl had married a baker in Melnitza. In finding her shop I got into the mud above my knees but she greeted me pleasantly. The nearer I got to home, the harder it seemed to ask for anything and to a girl from Kashoffka, where our family had always been so comfortably situated, it did not occur to offer me food. As the moments passed, I realized that I should not have the courage to ask. Her occupation made my hunger more excruciating, for every minute or two she would break off our conversation to open the door of the huge oven near by and take out a tray of buns or some fresh loaves of bread, the fragrance of which made me actually dizzy. We talked. The baby cried. She kneaded dough and took fresh rolls from the oven. I heard that some one from Kashoffka was due the next day, but she did not ask me to remain at her home during the night. This same hand that was taking the loaves out of the oven was afterward shot off by a Russian soldier for handing him a black loaf instead of a white one.

I left the bakery disheartened and weak, rambled through the muddy streets again, then had an inspiration. All my life I had heard of the blind hatmaker of Melnitza, who, although he could not see the sun if he looked straight at it, made the best caps in the whole countryside. Sam, the Beau Brummel of our village, had journeyed to Melnitza intermittently for years to purchase his caps from this man. My first gala cap for Passover had been made by the blind man also. That fact seemed to establish a bond between us. I felt no hesitancy in placing

my predicament before this friend I had never seen and who, under no circumstances, would ever see me. I inquired where he worked and set out quickly in that direction, sure I had solved my problem before the first words were spoken.

The blind hatmaker, when I told him I was the younger brother of one of his best and most faithful clients, welcomed me heartily.

'Nu, nu!' he said. 'So you are Herchel. Come right in. Of course!'

As I entered the tiny shop the old man called to a boy near by and sent him off on the run, to tell the wife to put on some extra potatoes and get some pickles. That evening in the blind hatmaker's house, the whole night in fact, I shall never forget. Several of his neighbors heard that he had a guest from Sebastopol and crowded in to hear about the distant city. Some were aged, others my own age or younger. They stood in the corners and sat upon the floor, asking me about Odessa and the Black Sea and the many provinces through which I had traveled. I began to feel my importance as the center of attraction, and told them tales which made their eyes stick out with wonder and caused them to forget the hour. I described electric lights, and they all shook their heads and murmured and tried to imagine turning a small button to flood the room with light, as if the sun were shining at midnight. How many times they whispered of the Devil. The telephone they could not grasp at all. One simply did not talk with people a hundred miles away. One talked with the dead, sometimes, God forbid, but how could one make one's voice heard at such a distance? Fine lungs they must have had at Sebastopol! I mentioned the boots of Peter the Great and Great Catherine's

handkerchief. My hearers held their breath as I described the landing of the Tsar, the crowds, bands, flags, and the velvet carpet on the street ten times as broad as the widest road in Melnitza. Spellbound, they asked about the Tsar, the Tsarina, the little son. At dawn I was still talking.

The story which impressed them most, next to the one about the Tsar, was about the first automobile which had been seen in Sebastopol. It had appeared on the avenue at the specified time and crowds were lined up on both sides to see it. The automobile was one of the comical old-fashioned type which looked like a carriage without shafts and was steered with a rod. It had spluttered and choked and stalled after going fifty yards, then after much tinkering had proceeded another hundred yards. As little, comparatively, as the city people were given to referring to the Devil, hundreds in the crowd had declared that a 'Chort' was imprisoned in the carriage, mistaking the barking of the engine for the Devil's remonstrances at being harnessed to the will of man. After that story, most of my hearers were afraid to go home.

Early in the morning the hatmaker got in touch with a man who agreed to drive me to Kashoffka on the promise that he would be paid at the other end. We set out, after cordial farewells, and I was delirious with excitement as we got nearer and nearer the village. A few miles from town, Parchvertsi, the peasant who was so proud of his fast horse, passed us and whipped up the animal in order to reach Kashoffka ahead of us and spread the news. So, as we passed the windmills and the small group of houses near it and reached the lord's garden, I saw a crowd gathering on the far side of the Grabley. The well, the mills, the bridges, and the blacksmith shop were in

their accustomed places. All the boys from my school turned out to see what one looks like after being in big cities. The magnificent trees shook their leaves above the water. As I jumped from the wagon and was embraced by Bessie, I heard some of my old neighbors gasp with dismay. For I was dressed, not as a Jewish boy should be, but in a cap with a patent-leather visor, long shining boots, a blue blouse, and white trousers. Around my waist I wore a leather belt with a metal buckle.

'He has turned into a Goy!' the old women said. 'To think that Hannah's son should do such a thing!'

'Where's your pillow?' whispered Bessie in my ear, before we reached her house. Reluctantly I told her that I had been obliged to pawn it in Odessa. She began to cry. I had the address of the man and one of the first things I did was to send for the pillow. Feivish paid my driver. My heart was beating so fast that I did not notice everything that was going on around me. I paced the floor of Bessie's house, walked the streets, responded to greetings from every corner. My father and my stepmother were not in evidence. He did not join the crowd which welcomed me, and I would not go to his house.

After a few days, which I spent retelling the stories which had made such an impression at Melnitza, Bessie urged me to seek out father and apologize to him. I refused at first, but finally made my way to the house each board of which I had seen nailed in its place, through the yard with its familiar shrubs and flowers. Father met me with an injured expression on his face.

'Is that the way to come home?' he began. 'Avoiding your father's house?'

I was very touchy, slow to unbend. I persisted in living with my sister, but the peasants, who had heard I was

back, kept asking father where I was until in despair he begged me to act like a son and live in the house with him. My stepmother joined his entreaties. Gradually I gave in, but I could not settle down to work. I was amazed and disappointed that the moment I actually saw Kashoffka, I felt an urge to get back to Sebastopol. The smells behind the houses, the mud and vermin, the ignorance of the inhabitants made me scornful. I have been told by my sister-in-law that I acted quite 'stuck up,' although I was not aware of it at the time. I did feel superior because of the deference paid me and the awe with which my stories were received. Even father had never actually seen the Tsar.

The first evening, when a crowd had gathered at Bessie's house to hear about my experiences, I had started to tell about the Tsar's visit. I described the landing, the yacht, the fleet and glittering harbor, the cathedral, the bands, the soldiers and dignitaries, but when I came to the point where the Tsar stepped upon the marble stairs leading from the sea, I had worked up to such a climax that I could not bring myself to say how disappointed I had been in his appearance. My hearers expected nothing of the kind. On their faces were written the awe and deference they held for such a mighty man. In their eyes I could see reflected the vision of a giant and a hero and the very force of their conception overcame the slim reality I was about to offer. I let it pass. I let Nicholas remain a fat, seven-foot aristocrat with a deep and terrible voice and a piercing eye. Why should I hurt my old neighbors' feelings?

I felt no less shy about mentioning the revolution, that hundreds of men and women were working to upset the Government. The townspeople would not have believed

it, anyway. As it was, most of them thought I must be lying about electric lights and shaftless carriages which spat steam and smoke.

Father called me a loafer and a lowlife, but I could not revive my old zeal for the work in the mill. Wooden wheels for machinery! The whole plant looked inadequate and ridiculous. The garden was pitifully small and tawdry, compared to my friend the admiral's. I quarreled continually with father, and the old enmity between my stepmother and me broke out more fiercely. We came to blows one day, and I pulled off my belt and beat her with the buckle. Father came running in again, but this time the peasants and workmen took my side and threatened to kill him if he laid hands on me. I decided then and there to quit Kashoffka for good. Never to return.

Had I known at that moment that Wikos's sister had received pleading letters from Sebastopol urging my return, even containing money for my first-class fare, I should have set off that same day. But Bessie had found out about the letters and, with poetic justice of which she was quite unconscious, prevented me from receiving the messages. She made Wikos's sister swear by all her dead ancestors that she would not disclose the contents of the letters to me. The result was that one of my distant relatives who was planning to return to America proposed that I go too. Of course, this was kept secret from father. Preparations began. The women baked all day, the relatives whispered and groaned all night. I was shy of the proposition at first because the man in question had a daughter about my age and wished to include her in the deal. He wanted me to marry her. I argued that it was tempting fate to anticipate our safe arrival by

making plans for an event which might take place after we reached America. God would surely punish us for such audacity, I said. The man and his wife nodded their heads. They were impressed by my reasoning.

'You see what a boy learns in the city!' the mother said admiringly. She believed everything would be arranged, once we were safe in America. I don't know what the girl felt. Very likely she was not consulted.

From Bessie I learned a secret which put an end to all hopes that I might by some hook or crook get a matrika. Father was afraid that I might run away to America and that the Government would confiscate his property and perhaps send him to jail as a conspirator.

There were four of us in the party about to emigrate, my distant relative, his son, a cattle dealer who attended the Trisk Chassidim synagogue, and me. It seemed that every one in town except father was aware of the plan, and each evening relatives gathered in the various houses to wring their hands and wish us well. Neighbors gave me little presents, those who had people on the other side of the water entrusted me with letters addressed to Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, or Omaha. They supposed America to be like Kashoffka, only much larger. The fare was about one hundred and twenty-five dollars, including shelter in cheap hotels or wherever the agent chose to place us in the several villages and cities where we were obliged to stop *en route*. All arrangements were completed for the voyage. We had chosen an evening for our departure when father would be away on a business trip. Bessie, almost hysterical with grief, entreated me to send her news from Sam the moment I found him, tearful men, women, and children followed our wagon to the Grabley. There an incident occurred

which has always puzzled me. My stepmother must have known I was going away, for she was standing at the entrance of the Grabley with a sack of dried pears in her hand which she offered me as a present, weeping as she said good-bye. That was the last time I ever saw her, or the Grabley. I remember her crying and holding out to me the little linen sack of pears. How many bitter feelings that memory has canceled!

The dim village which I had so loved and which for me had been like the Garden of Eden when my mother was alive, receded as we drove along the road toward Roshist. I did not feel the twinges of remorse which characterized my first exit, for just then Kashoffka seemed mean and dirty and inconsequential to me. The memory of its beauties, of the kindness and integrity of its simple people, returned to me unblemished as I grew older, called to me across miles of ocean countless times afterward. But the long journey lay ahead, and, what was foremost in all our minds, the danger of crossing the frontier. Wherever we stopped on the way, the danger was emphasized to us. Thousands of men and women had been arrested at that point in their essay toward freedom and opportunity.

My own purposes in starting for America were not of a lofty kind. The incentive was to find my brother Sam. The impelling power, my disappointment with Kashoffka and my resentment toward my father and his second wife. I did expect, however, that the new world would be alive and colorful, like Odessa or Sebastopol, and that I should be successful there. We rode third-class on the train, but since all of us did it, I felt no shame about it. Every kopek had to count. It was early in October, so that the nights were cold and we awoke quite stiff from

our short slumbers between stations. About two days and nights after we had left Roshist, we got off the train at Zmelinka and took a branch line which brought us to a small station not far from the Austrian border. Here we were met by an agent for the steamship company and taken under cover of darkness to his house in a town called Essiatin. We were cautioned a thousand times that we must make no noise and on no account leave the house or show ourselves. In a long narrow room underground we found ourselves lodged with forty or fifty other prospective emigrants, all in terror of discovery. Many of these had joined us at Zmelinka. There the agent had done his best to find out how much money we had, in order to get as much as he could before he finally escorted us across the border.

In the cellar we were told that the time was very inauspicious, that the police had just caught a large party and had sent them back to the interior in chains, that news had leaked out to the effect that another crowd was trying to escape. The delay was explained the first two or three days by the excuse that we must wait for other members of the party. Still, no others came. There was no room for them. At night, as short as I was, I could not find space to stretch out on the floor. Some of the women had babies that cried and complained day and night. The smell of feet and garlic was outrageous and neither a door nor a window could be opened except when friends of the agent came in to offer us food for sale. Their prices were three and four times higher than the value of the food outside the door, but for those who had brought an insufficient supply there was no other means of getting nourishment. The most ample supplies diminished as days passed. Everything was

eaten except the cheese cakes which were supposed to avert seasickness.

The subject of cheese cakes reminds me of a characteristic trick of father's. He was extremely fond of cheese cake and for a long time was the only man in Kashoffka who had crossed the ocean. He told the relatives of all prospective emigrants that a large supply of cheese cakes must be taken on the voyage and that they must be cooked just exactly right. The only way they could test the cakes was to offer some to father. These were sent to our house by the dozens. He would assume a judicial air, nibble one of the cakes, and usually declare that he would have to take more time in deciding whether they would actually ward off the frightful malady of the steerage. After having eaten all the sample cakes, he would suggest that another batch be baked with just a bit more cheese, or browned slightly on the top. Then he would be given more samples. When finally he O.K.'d a batch of cakes, the housewives would thank him fervently, then hasten to the ruv's house and arrange for the latter to pray for a safe journey. Departures for America were the scenes of wilder demonstrations of grief than were funerals, as I have said before.

All forty of us, cooped up in the ill-smelling cellar, were forced at last to buy black bread and herring from the vendors admitted by the agent who had us in charge. Dissatisfaction increased hourly. We were certain the agent was exploiting us, so one day when the agent's daughter, a lean vixenish woman past the marriageable age, came in and shouted abuse at us, I jumped upon her from the table and beat her with my fists. I declared that I would go out into the town and see if what the agent had told us was true. Some of my companions were

afraid to have me go, others encouraged me. I pried open the door and went out, and found the town as peaceful as could be, not a soldier in sight, and in the stores food was displayed for prices as low as those of Kashoffka. The next man who appeared to sell food was set upon by the nearest members of our party and escaped with his life, but with his clothes torn and his face bruised. The rebellion I had started assumed more threatening proportions. We told the agent that if he did not get us out of there in two days we would set fire to his house and march out through the streets in a body, denouncing him to the police. Our nerves were at such a pitch that anything might have happened. We had been imprisoned, forty in a room, without light, air, or proper food, and kept in a state of nervous tension the agent willfully aggravated, for a fortnight.

The night following, about ten o'clock, a peasant with a load of hay drove up to the door and some of us were hurried into the wagon and covered with hay. Other wagons followed and were similarly loaded. The wagon I was in was drawn into a barn some distance away and there our party reassembled. Everything was dark and tense. We kept hearing voices outside, horses' hoofs at a gallop, whistles, and mysterious calls. Four hours we waited in the loft, cowering together, then about two o'clock in the morning we were led out into a marshy field and told to lie flat in the mud and water. Ahead I could see the gleam of the river which marked the border. Soon I heard the sound of the soldiers changing guard, but clouds obscured the moon and I could not make out the figures. A baby started to cry. I heard a choking noise and the crying ceased abruptly, but we all thought our end had come. From the sound, I am afraid the

baby was shut off rather roughly. At my right I heard a nervous cough. I was nearly choking from the impulse to cough too. It was frightfully contagious.

The agent stood over me, whispering. Something had gone wrong, he said. A soldier must be bribed. As a last outrage, he collected from the frightened people lying on the ground coins, pieces of jewelry, even watches of the old-fashioned kind which wind with a key. Finally the wagons appeared again and we were loaded in and started in the direction of the river. I heard the horses splashing in the water and expected to be shot at any moment. With each step the horses took, my fright increased. Then the horses got over their depth and started swimming, the driver urging them on with as little noise as possible. Everything conceivable came to my mind, jumbled landscapes, memories of shots and cries, parables I had heard at Cheder, fights, storms on the Black Sea. The horses had their feet on bottom once more. They scrambled up the bank, dragging us along. They stopped. We were in Austria. We were safe. We were free.

I poked my head through the straw and glanced at the river behind us, and at the darkness, vast and impenetrable, which was Russia, the land of my birth and childish triumphs, the scene of my disillusionment, grief, and adventure. I felt that I had already lived a lifetime, that the pastoral calm of Kashoffka and the splendor and violence of the great cities had filled my earthly existence and that by crossing a river I had died and found myself alive again, but changed, all access to the land I had known cut off for eternity and with an unexplored eternity ahead, ominous and at the same time alluring. Years later I learned that the ancient Greeks had believed that

Charon, a grim ferryman, would take them across a dark river when they died, and would disembark them in the land of shades. It is easy for me to understand how such a belief grew up.

'Guten Abend,' said a voice a few feet away. I was chilled with fright, then as I saw what was taking place a thrill gradually took the place of my consternation, a sensation I had never quite experienced before, for a soldier, a member of the guard on the Austrian side, had seen me, half hidden in the straw, and had come to speak to me in a reassuring, friendly way. He wore a cape and a feather in his hat, and his stalwart figure and musket with bayonet set seemed like a protection rather than a menace.

'Guten Abend,' he repeated, and a dozen fervent voices answered him at once. It was not evening, but morning, actually and in a figurative sense, in so far as that wagon load of emigrants was concerned. For me, it was both evening and morning, the twilight of the life I have tried to re-create in words, the morning of one which is not complete yet.

Our experience in Austria was pleasant enough to fortify us for the days in the steerage. The great danger lay behind us. We might get lost and starve, we might drown, but our hazards from now on would have no connection with our race or our religion. The excitement I had expected to feel when we started out from Kashoffka welled up in me after crossing the Austrian frontier. The agent there was as different from the man who had abused and victimized us on the Russian side as two men can be. In his house we saw a real patriarchal Jewish household, dating back in many of its particulars before the burning of the temple of Solomon. The old man had

a soft white beard more than a foot long, white hair, black eyes which were kindly in spite of their amazing contrast to his dim complexion. He had I do not know how many sons and daughters, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law. When they sat around the table, they numbered forty at least, and the old patriarch sat at the head. In the morning, the younger men and women, some of them fifty years of age, came to the head of the house for their daily instructions. He divided the work, settled disputes with a pained look on his face that disputes should arise in his house, read the special Psalms for each occasion, advised and encouraged those of us who were to depart for another land. We were his guests, not his victims, and I remember the dramatic force and dignity of his denunciation of a man who brought before him a false claim against us. He raised his hand and pointed his long forefinger at the malefactor, sitting rigidly in his high-backed chair, like a king of old rebuking a treacherous minister.

In Germany we were not less kindly treated. At Tarnopel we had to change trains, and during the two hours we had to wait I saw quite a bit of the city. When we first left the coach, one of our party wanted to buy some food at the counter in the station and was astonished when the clerk could not understand a word he said. A large prosperous-looking man near by, seeing we were emigrants and foreigners, ordered a whole basketful of fruit, rolls, cakes, and candy. Other by-standers threw in cigars and bottles of beer and wine. When we offered to pay, the large man laughed and by a gracious gesture made us understand we must not offer him money. I broke away from the others and entered a large beer-hall where some students were drinking. I felt a kinship with

them because of my university belt and ordered a stein of beer almost as large as I was.

We soon reached Rotterdam and boarded a Channel steamer, after being properly checked up and counted by the agent there. I could not yet pass an official without trembling on account of my missing matrika. It had become a deeply rooted habit with me. That night on the steamer I had all the best of it, for I had sailed severe storms on the Black Sea and was used to having a vessel pitch and roll and all but turn itself inside out. My companions, who had never seen a body of water larger than the river on the Austrian frontier, and who had done all their sailing in a boat hacked out from the trunk of a tree, were sick before we had left the wharf. The Channel lived up to its reputation, which many of the bystanders in Rotterdam took care to impress upon us. The scene I described in the Chassidim synagogue was not less noisy than the hold of the Channel steamer the night we crossed, only the shouts were not of joy but of terror. Men and women prayed, sank to their knees, lost their balance, and interspersed their prayers with that parabolic sound of retching and vomiting which is the aural equivalent of a skyrocket. My companions asked one another to forgive their sins, one against the other, and gave up themselves as lost, but nevertheless, after hours which seemed like weeks to them, we entered the river and made our way toward London.

I was at the porthole every moment, and caught an occasional glimpse of a green countryside or a tidy garden on the outskirts of a village with dozens of red chimney-pots. But the city disappointed me terribly. I thought our interpreter had made a mistake, for London was so colorless and dingy and the men around the water-

front had sour faces and seemed lifeless and sullen. The sailors wore drab clothes, compared to the Russian seamen, the cathedrals and big buildings were smoke-color and wedged tightly together.

We did not stop long in London, not more than a few hours, and when we got under way to Liverpool on the train, my fellow voyagers were seized with a fresh terror, for the train was an express and tore over the rails at a rate which would make a Russian train appear to be standing still. There were more shrieks, prayers, mutual forgiveness of sins. I will admit that at times I was sure the train would leave the rails and tear through the countryside, uphill and down, turning turtle in some deep ravine. We were taken to a cheap, ill-smelling hotel in Liverpool and there we had to wait about a week. In my explorations, I found a newsboy who spoke Yiddish and was taught by him how to sell papers. I felt immeasurably safer, after acquiring a trade I could ply in an English-speaking land, for the names of the papers were not hard to pronounce. I had some difficulty with the English coins. I was more disappointed as a whole with Liverpool than I had been with London. The same grim faces, the same nasal monotones, smoke and dirt on the roofs and buildings, no songs nor flags nor resplendent domes. No broad avenues with bridle paths on which military officers and high-bred ladies cantered. I preferred Odessa or Sebastopol, infinitely, and wished heartily that I were back on the coast of the Black Sea.

Bearing in mind the season, for it was then late in November, it will be readily understood that our voyage was a rough one. We embarked on the Canada and set out for Halifax, and thence to Portland, Maine. I was lucky enough not to be seasick, but as we neared America

I began to be frightfully nervous about my lack of papers. I had lost all confidence in my distant relative, who claimed to be able to speak English and very evidently could not. While we were on the high sea, he came to us with a rumor that one half of our number were to be sent back. Every one was thrown into gloom and terror, for to be sent back to Russia meant not only the end of all hopes and aspirations, but long terms in Siberia or even death. My foreboding about my relative was well founded. Before we landed, he decided that he should represent that I was his son, for what reason I do not know. What worried me were the stories I had heard about eye examinations, for I had had some minor eye disease in childhood and was afraid the doctors would know it by a mere glance at me.

Halifax Harbor was beautiful, in a scenic way, and the scent of pines which drifted out to us long before we could see land gave me a feeling of welcome before I had caught a glimpse of the new continent. Portland, however, as I saw it from the Canada and the sheds of the water-front, was as dingy as Liverpool, and the people had the same taciturn, self-centered expression. The buildings were of wood, and in need of paint, the streets narrow, the churches drab. Could this be the Promised Land? I could not believe it. Still I was in terror for fear I should not be permitted to land. My relative's incompetency did actually cause me to be held up. While the others went down the gangplank, I was detained aboard and had to sleep on the Canada, from which the steam heat had been turned off. In departing, the others had forgotten to give me the necessary money to ensure my entry. I spent a frightful and desperate night, a real descent into hell.

Some one had advised me to ask for a hearing before the immigration board, and this I did, through an interpreter. Facing those strange men and women, in a drab building on the water-front, I brought into play all the instincts and tactics which have come to me from my father. I wept myself, as I laid bare all the facts, and the members of the board began freely using their handkerchiefs. When the first tear dropped from the eyes of a kind-looking woman who, to my great surprise, was one of the officials, I knew I had won. I unloosed all my eloquence, always through an interpreter who stopped me frequently to repeat strange words which brought more sympathetic looks to the faces before me, and painted the years in chains in Siberia which lay before me if they turned me down. I told of the kind and solicitous older brother who was waiting for me in Boston, his pockets filled with the money I lacked. Sam would have been flattered to death if he had heard me.

I was admitted, as must be already evident. I joined my companions and we rode on a train as far as our money would carry us. Then we finished the journey on foot. As we passed the North Station with our bundles, wearing our Russian clothes, every one stared and laughed at us. None of us knew where to go, except that my unreliable relative knew a man named Winter somewhere in the city. As we were standing on the sidewalk in front of the North Station I saw a man coming down Canal Street who had a familiar look. I did not know him personally, but he wore a flat derby hat on the back of his head, had a rather scanty beard, and was sheltered from the chill winds by a frock coat several sizes too large for him. No one needed to tell me of what race he came, for I had seen his type in cities which dotted an entire

hemisphere. I ran across the street and met him at the corner.

'Sholom aleichem!' I said breathlessly.

He stopped short.

'Aleichem sholom!' he replied.

And, eagerly, I asked in Yiddish:

'Where does Winter live?'

'Nu, nu! Winter,' he repeated. 'I don't know.'

III

IMAGINE, if you can, the passage of eleven years, eventful for me, whom you have last seen on the threshold of Boston and of another life, pastoral and peaceful for the people of Kashoffka living in merciful ignorance and isolation. Thus we reach the year 1914 and are back again in old Russia. The village is the same, in all its beauty, simplicity, piety, superstition, and squalor. The year opens like any other year, with carols from the Russian church which faces the Grabley, with songs and stories in the Jewish homes clustered around the circle, which is white with snow, as are the roofs, the pasture lands, the gardens outlying, and the branches of the oaks and pines in the vast encircling forest. The anvil of the blacksmith, toiling on his island, resounds. Peasants gather in the sheds adjoining the largest house in town, at the river's brink. Fishermen cut holes in the ice. Peasants slap their shoulders with their colored mittens as they trudge beside loads of wood for the stoves.

The ice breaks, in season. The snow gradually disappears. New leaves burst from the branches overshadowing the Grabley. The storks return and all the children scream with delight. It is spring. Purim is celebrated and Kashoffka is alive with children bearing presents from house to house. The feast of Passover has gone by once more and with the crumbs which have floated down the river have been borne away, it is hoped, the sins of those who cast them upon the waters. Shavooish arrives and the synagogues are decked with broad green leaves. How gayly the peasants sing, young men

and women together as they start out for the fields, rakes and shovels over their shoulders! If, in the exuberance of spring, with the rich soil smelling to the sun and buds around them everywhere, one of the young men, in a sort of frenzy, seizes a lithe young girl by the waist, they pretend to fight, then go rolling out of sight into the bushes, pass it by. They are young. They are happy. Later, the priest will make things right — or the girl will get a beating.

The drowsiness of summer steals over the land, and clothed in summer foliage, with grain ripening on the slopes and the trees of the forest sheltering myriads of flowers at their feet, Kashoffka seems to have gathered its share of Nature's gifts and to take on a dignity which is diminished only if one goes near enough to hear the continuous drone of the flies around the houses.

At the busiest season of the year, when the peasants are beginning the harvest and the Jews tramp from village to village, trading, or work around the mill in which cereals are prepared, linseed is pressed, or wool is combed, a stranger is seen riding toward the Grabley. As he comes nearer, the villagers see that he is wearing a uniform, not as bright a uniform as that of the Rotnik, but, nevertheless, the vestments of authority of some sort. As he crosses the Grabley and a crowd gathers to meet him, it is evident that he is a non-commissioned officer in the army of the Tsar. The old men and women tremble, the young boys hide, and the soldier, dismounting, demands the Starosta. Welfl, mild man that he is, steps forward. The peasants are summoned in from the fields, those who are close enough to be reached, Jews creep from their doorways and join the crowd in the sanded circle. The soldier takes from his blouse a paper,

conspicuously decorated with ribbons and seals. It is a message to his subjects from His Majesty the Tsar. Russia has declared war upon Germany.

A sigh of relief goes up, for some of the Jews had feared much worse, that the soldier had been sent to take away a son they had hidden or to drag a father away to prison for having caused false entries to be made. The last war was with China, years before, and in the newspapers the ox merchants brought back from Warsaw were cartoons of men with pigtails fleeing before Russian bayonets. War was bad, but it was so far away that all the peasants went back to their work and the Jews to their trading. Weeks passed. Information drifted in slowly and inaccurately. Kashoffka continued its seasonal round.

Part of the news I later received concerning the fate of the village was given me by the wife and young daughter of a junk dealer in Chelsea, Massachusetts. As I have said, several Kashoffka families came to America by means of the same travel agency which brought me here and since they landed in Portland or Boston, most of them settled in New England. Some of the younger ones took on the appearance of Americans quickly, but the old-timers, except for their clothes, remained much the same. When the time came that they had money to spend, most of them desired above all else to get back to Kashoffka, just to visit their relatives and to see the old place once again. The wife of the junk dealer, whom I will call Mrs. Weintrub, had a father living in Kolk, where the old man with the bass fiddle and Morris the fiddler still made merry on gala occasions. Just before the war broke out, Mrs. Weintrub journeyed from Chelsea, Massachusetts, to Kolk, Volhynia, taking with her a little son and two small daughters to show to the old folks.

The messenger I have just described in Kashoffka rode on to Kolk, thirty miles distant, and re-read his proclamation. Mrs. Weintrub was in the crowd and decided that if there was going to be trouble, however remote, she had better be getting home. The merchants advised her not to try it, that all sorts of people were being shot as spies near the border. When she applied for permission to travel, it was denied her. She was marooned in Kolk for the duration of the war, to the despair of Mr. Weintrub, who could get scant news of her. The little son was too young to care.

Now the sight of Mrs. Weintrub and her charming daughters, one a graduate of Boston University and although young well started toward a career as a social worker, makes what I am about to say seem utterly incredible. Mrs. Weintrub is a middle-aged woman, the least bit fat, very slightly stooped, but with traces of beauty which her daughters, who resemble her, bear out in a striking manner. Only Mrs. Weintrub's eyes are wide and ineffably tired. She speaks of war or of cooking in the same tone of voice, and sighs between phrases. As she told me her story she served me solicitously with tea and home-made cake. Her husband was working in the yard, a gruff-voiced vigorous man with humorous eyes.

Esther, as we will call the older daughter, was eight years old in 1914. In 1916, after several months at Kolk, she walked the thirty miles to Kashoffka to see her grandmother and got there just in time to see the war, the tide of which had overflowed slowly Old Poland and the rest of Volhynia, touch the village for the first time. A troop of Cossacks rode in, dismounting in the sanded circle. Others followed, and the families were routed out of the nearest houses to make room for them. The village was

in terror. Men were dragged before the commanding officer and questioned. Every Jew was thought to be a spy. The hens and chickens who had clucked around the yards were caught by soldiers and roasted over open fires, and the store of vodka was passed around. Girls were hidden in lofts or smuggled through the picket lines to safer towns near by, but before the Cossacks got thoroughly settled an officer rode across the Grabley at full speed, an order was shouted, and the Cossacks set off in a general westerly direction. Their places were taken by a regiment of infantry who marched in beneath the arch of trees and after a few hours marched out again. Artillery was being dragged along the roads across the river. The infantrymen got what chickens were left and pulled up most of the vegetables.

It is hard to conceive of the state of mind of the villagers, with thousands of men encamped around and among them. At midnight, as the wind shifted, a faint rumble like thunder was heard to the west. It grew louder and at dawn the soldiers who had passed through two days before came rushing in the other direction, no longer in marching order, but bleeding, exhausted, their ammunition gone, their muskets thrown away. Streams of them poured along the roads, colliding with the reserve troops on the way to the front. Enraged, one of the officers riding through Kashoffka caused the first civilian casualty there. He saw an old woman sewing in her doorway and somehow the sight enraged him, inflamed as he was by defeat and disgrace. He slashed her shoulder and her breast with his saber as he trotted past. All through the day the retreat swept over the village. The gardens were already trodden down, the sanded circle littered with filth. Men and women, hidden in their houses,

heard the thud of feet hour after hour, screams now and then, and the sound of guns, unmistakably louder.

Stragglers appeared, too tired to keep up with their companies. With what weapons they had left, they forced the housewives to give them food, everything in the house. Then at the edge of the forest, more cavalry swept into view, but clad in strange gray-green uniforms and wearing spiked helmets. No one knew who they were exactly. A squadron of them deployed around the town, and this time it was the Russian stragglers and not the young girls who hid themselves. The horsemen entered, called for the Starosta, and Welfl, expecting his last day had come, stepped forward resignedly, muttering prayers to God. But the newcomers showed no disposition to slaughter him. They were Austrians. Russia was at war with Austria, also, it seemed.

Austrian infantry followed. The houses in the center of the village were again requisitioned, but this time the inhabitants were allowed to use a part of the house and the civilians and soldiers shared food and lodgings equitably. The officers, elated at the success of their troops, patted the old women on the shoulder and gave presents to the children. Most of them could understand Yiddish if it were spoken slowly and repeated several times. In the weeks that followed, Kashoffka became resigned to war. The villagers sold the very few chickens which were left, salvaged a part of the vegetable gardens, started working again at their several trades and occupations. Prayers for the success of the Austrians went up in all the synagogues. Evidently Austrians were splendid people, Goyim or not. All day the soldiers worked hard, digging trenches at the edge of the forest. In the evening they smoked and sang and were sent to bed at nine o'clock.

Meanwhile in Kolk, where Mrs. Weintrub, her son and her younger daughter were staying, one regiment of the retreating Russian army was being reassembled. I have described the way Russian truck gardens were laid out, with deep trenches between the rows of vegetables. One night a company of soldiers, one or two of whom had caught sight of Mrs. Weintrub and noticed she was good to look at, broke into her father's house and dragged her out into the garden. Her son was in her arms, and in the excitement he was taken along. He died that night of fright, because of what was happening to his mother. An order to advance was shouted, while she was still alive and partly conscious, and the Russians marched again toward Kashoffka, preceding their sally by rather unsystematic artillery preparation, for the ammunition rarely fitted the cannon, and so the Russian soldiers, unbelievably brave in battle, had a slim chance when they went into action against a well-organized foe. They did retake Kashoffka, however. It was a little out of line and the Austrians thought it best not to sacrifice too many men, but to snap up the town later. Before they returned, Kashoffka was sadly changed, hardly worth the trouble of capturing, it would seem. Beryl the tailor and three others had been executed. More old women had been sabered and young girls chased into ruined gardens. The Russians having heard how well the population had got along with the enemy, each villager was considered as a spy, was beaten, questioned, prodded with knives, robbed, and kicked from place to place. Ornaments and trinkets, poor as they were, were stolen, furniture and bric-à-brac used to feed the camp-fires. Then the Austrians came back, but this time they laid down a barrage on the east side, just beyond the Catholic church and a stray

shell hit the dome of blue and gold and knocked it into splinters. Other shells fell short and the thatched houses collapsed like birds' nests. The last act of most of the Russian soldiers in the village was to slash at some detested civilian. The next day the Austrians restored order and were grieved that so many of their former acquaintances had been killed.

Esther lost count of how many times this process was repeated, but during those months she had no opportunity to rejoin her mother in Kolk. With each capture and evacuation of the village, buildings were razed, inhabitants maimed and killed. Some high officer among the Central European Powers must have got tired of hearing conflicting reports from this tiresome little place called Kashoffka, so important to them because it was at the fork of two rivers, down both of which floated corpses daily, and equidistant between two lines of railroad. At any rate, the Russians were again in possession and this time they were to be dislodged with more thoroughness. A bombardment began which made all others seem like the twittering of sparrows, and when the Russian infantry started pell-mell toward Kolk, the cavalry which appeared among the stumps of the woods wore another kind of uniform. Hiding in rubbish heaps and old cellars, the few remaining inhabitants of Kashoffka trembled with fear. The Austrians had given place to another set of soldiery and no one knew what would happen. Before the newcomers marched in, they made an end to the forest. It had acted as a barrier too long. By means of shells and axes the woods, miles and miles, were demolished, and so the great circle around the town was widened and broken.

The advance scouts announced themselves as Germans,

and proved more orderly than the Austrians had been. They were friendly with the Austrians, it turned out, but considered the latter were a bit careless in holding strategic points. Kashoffka was placed upon military maps and its name passed around in distant cities, but no longer could it be called a town. Then came news of the revolution. The Tsar had been killed. All was in confusion. Before the first marauding band of revolutionists or counter-revolutionists swept through Kolk and Kashoffka, Mrs. Weintrub found her daughter Esther, and, barefooted, carrying the younger child in her arms, walked one hundred miles to Chelem, in what then had become Poland. Somehow she got hold of a sack of eatables, was given some sugar by an army officer, and in the midst of world chaos set up a store.

'In two weeks I was making a living,' she said, proudly, to me. She showed me a photograph an officer had taken of her at that time and it revealed what she had failed to tell me, that on her hundred-mile barefoot walk, carrying one daughter and leading another by the hand, she had neglected to eat. Esther said that her mother carried a loaf of hard black bread and broke off a piece now and then for her and her sister, eating nothing herself.

The last remnants of Kashoffka were scattered, the last remaining trees cut down, by a band of outlaw soldiery called Perclutskis, for their leader. Then the Poles, who had somehow been organized into an army, marched through Volhynia, and, distrusting the Jews for some reason, dragged the old men from their hiding places and cut off their beards with swords, seldom failing to take a slice of the chin for good measure. Mrs. Weintrub told me of meeting a peasant and his wife who were on the

verge of death from starvation. They had eaten boiled nettles, and the peasant said they made him feel numb in his body but he was still hungry in his throat. His wife said nothing, for she was dying. The man, a day later, got some rotten potato parings and they saved his life.

'He was a solid man,' Mrs. Weintrub said.

Bolshevik troops tramped over Kashoffka, but remember that now Kashoffka did not mean a group of simple, hardworking, uninformed Jews and peasants. They were all dead, and a few of them buried. Neither did it mean a circle of houses, with gardens and fields surrounding them and deep woods beyond. The troops in 1918 marched over Kashoffka without knowing it, and later, when nearly all troops everywhere had gone home for a while, the valley west of where Kashoffka used to lie was transformed into the largest graveyard in the world, tens of miles of crosses, mostly without names.

For those who died on the Western Front, there have been flags and ceremonies. Pilgrimages have been made to the spots where they fell, eulogies spoken, tombs set up for unknown soldiers to symbolize those whose names were lost in the shuffle. It is not so with the Russians, Austrians, Germans, Poles, Bolsheviks, Menshiviks, Perclutskis, and so on, who fell in Volhynia. They had scant place in the news, they have an equally precarious hold upon the international memory. There are no Jewish graves. One cannot conclude that the hundreds of thousands of Jews drafted into the dozens of armies all survived. They are covered with crosses, too. After the war, in order that mother's grave might be marked, I sent Sam and Lena, his wife, to (what shall I say?) Kashoffka. A peasant, carrying his army boots over his shoulder, led them over shell-pocked fields where rusted

bayonets, bones of horses and of men, grenades, and fragments of harness still lie. Bewildered, the peasant pointed out a spot near a caved-in trench.

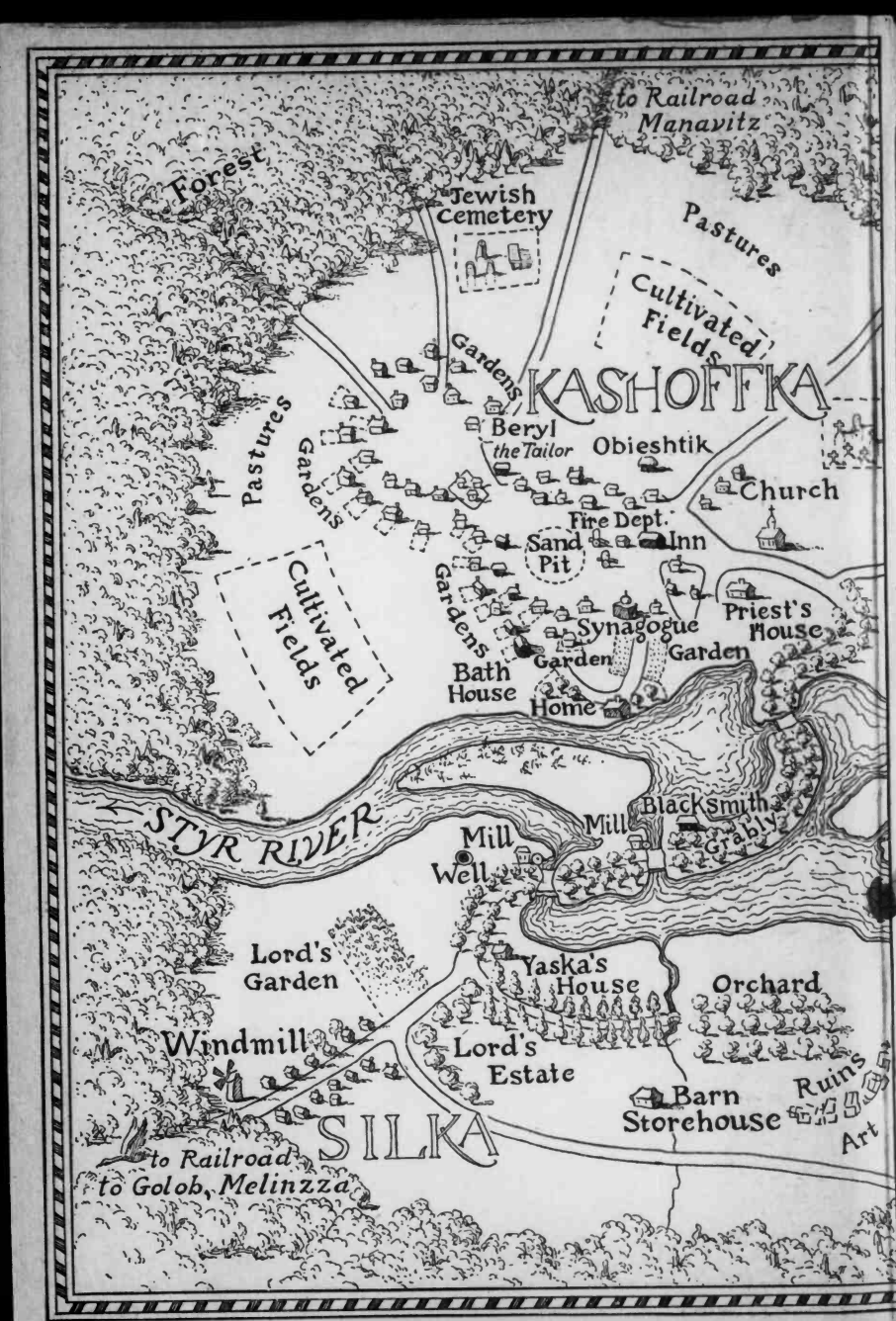
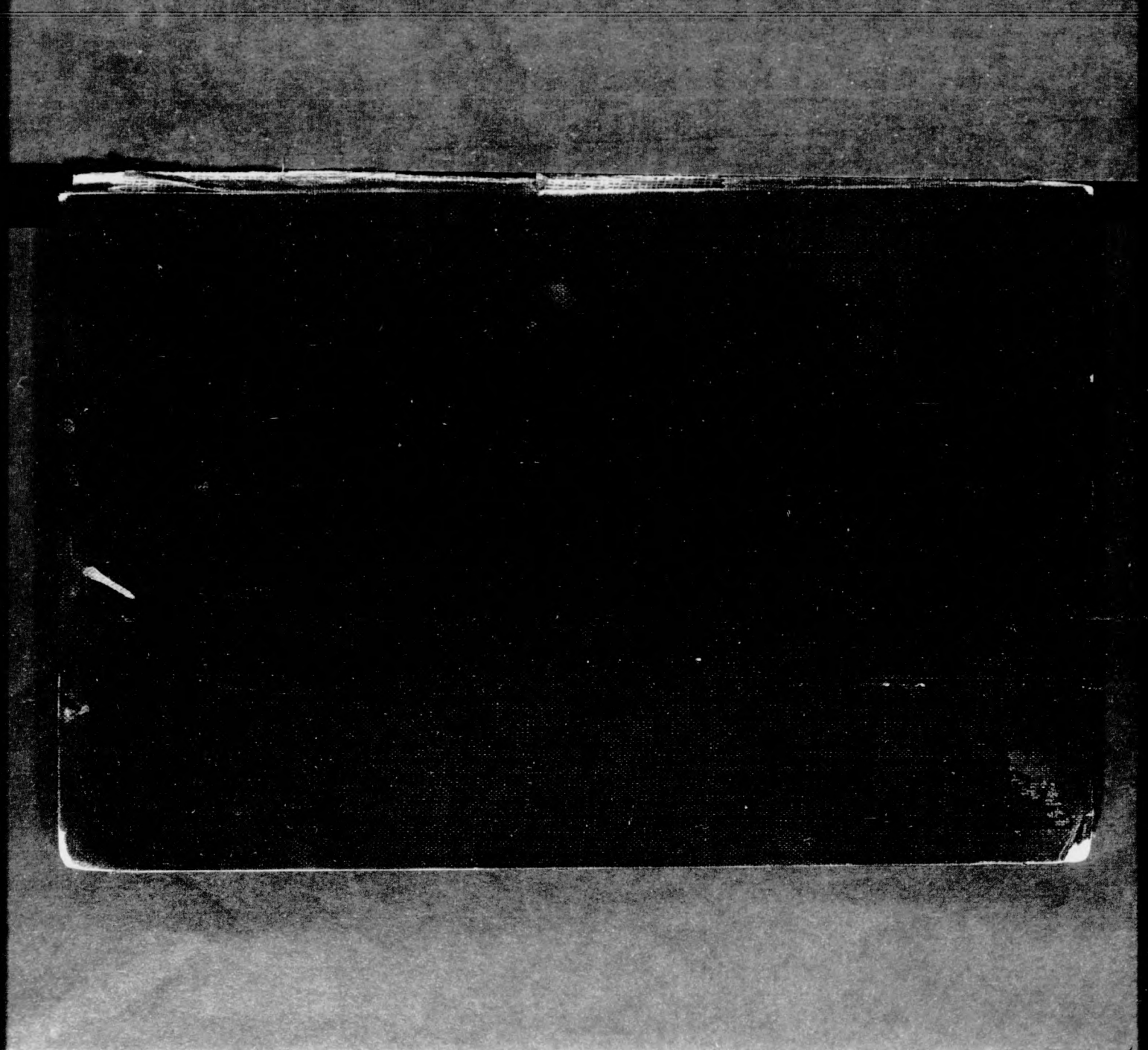
'It must have been here,' he said.

Sam dropped his eyes. There was no use to search. At the river's bank, that summer afternoon, he could find no signs of father's house and gardens. Kashoffka has never been resettled. Nothing is left of the woods. The men and women are gone without trace.

I am sorry that you are gone, Kashoffka! I am sorry you became important to armies and important men! I should like to think of you serene in your nest of fields and forest, to shake the hands of your simple-hearted men who now are ghosts in the mists which still hover about the surface of your silent river at night. You were mean, compared with Babylon and Athens, obscure and unheroic when one thinks of Liège. But if I have brought you back to a semblance of life, it is the least I can do in return for what you did for me. To me, you will never be shabby nor unworthy of a prayer when victims of men's greed and lust are mentioned. Woods may spring up where once your forests stood, but the birds will know nothing of you. Barbed wire and hand grenades, rusted and useless, may be scraped from your fields in time, but where are the fragrance and beauty of your gardens?

Another age is ushered in. Men think new thoughts, unmindful that they resemble your old ones, sometimes. Sink back again into oblivion, Kashoffka! Rest in peace! And as long as I live I shall take you often from a casket in my memory, hold your beauties to the light, and salute you. Farewell.

THE END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